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DISCOURSES

2

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Volume 2

Abubabaji Publications

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The Upanishads: Introduction

I am inspired today by the Upanishads. Their truth has penetrated my mind. Many people, specially Hindu children, if they are asked the meaning of the Upanishad, they will reply that one who sits at the feet of his master. This is commonly known. But only knowing this is not enough. You must also know that what the Upanishads actually mean. So today you will have a summary of the Upanishads. In connection with this there are also certain other subjects which I am going to put before you. They are God, meditation, contemplation, love and joy. All these subjects should be dealt seperately, so that people can understand them and they can penetrate into their very hearts. So we are now going to start with the Upanishads.

In Sanskrit the word, Upanishad, means, as we have said, sitting at the feet of the master. Now, when we read in the Gospel that Jesus went up into the mountain and when he was seated, his disciples came unto him. We can easily imagine them sitting at his feet to listen to the Sermon on the Mount. Thus, this sermon can also be considered as an Upanishad. The Upanishads

are spiritual treaties of the different times, the oldest of which was composed between 800 and 400 B.C. The longest, and perhaps the oldest of the Upanishads are the Brihadaranyaka and the Chhandogya. They cover about 100 pages each. The Isha Upanishad, which is, perhaps, the most important, has but only 18 verses. Just like the Holy Koran the first chapter and the first section of which is called "Sura Fatiha" have only seven verses.

The Bhagavad Gita could also be considered as an Upanishad, as at the end of each chapter we find a note which begins with the words, "Herein the Upanishad of the glorious Bhagavad Gita."

The composers of the Upanishads were thinkers and poets. They had the vision of a poet. The poet knows well that if poetry takes us away from a lower reality of daily life, it is only to lead us to the vision of a higher reality. Even in the daily life, when limitations give way before poetry, we find ourselves faced with the joy of liberation. These compositions are as much above the mere archaeological curiosities of scholars. Scholarship is necessary to bring to us the fruits of ancient wisdom. But only elevation

of thoughts and emotion can help us to enjoy them and transform them into life.

One of the messages in the Upanishads is that the spirit can only be known through union with Him and not through mere learning. Can any amount of learning make us feel love? Can it make us see beauty or hear unheard melodies? Some have only seen the variety of thoughts of the Upanishads and not their underlying spirit and unity. To them, the words in the sacred text might be applied as who sees variety and not the unity and wonders on from death to death. The spirit of the Upanishads is the Spirit of the universe - Brahman. God Himself is their underlying Spirit. The Christians must feel that Brahman is God and to the Hindus God is Brahman. Unless a feeling of reverence, independant of the barriers of names, can be felt for the Supreme, the saying of the Upanishads will remain true: "Words are variant." The same idea is expressed by the Prophet that there is no end to writing books.

The Holy Spirit may be the nearest translation of Brahman in Christian language. Whilst God the Father and God the Son are in the foreground in the minds of the Christians the Holy Spirit

seems to receive less adoration. Similarly, in India, Brahman of the Upanishads is not as popular as Shiva, Vishnu, Krishna or even Brahma, the manifestation of Brahman as Creator and not to be confused with Him, is not the leading deity in the daily devotion of the Hindus as are the other two of the trinity— Shiva and Vishnu.

The Upanishadic doctrine is not a religion of the many, but rather is the spirit behind all religions. It is the central theme repeated in such a wonderful variety of ways. Brahman is in the universe. God in His transendent and eminence is also the spirit of man, the self in everyone, and in all 'atma'. Thus the momentus statement is made in the Upanishads that God must not be sought as something far away, seperate from us, to Brahman, to God Himself.

Thus, when the sages of the Upanishads are pressed for a definition of God, they remain silent. God, in words they say, "neti neti" not this, not this. But when pressed for a positive explanation, they utter sublimely simple words, "Tat Tavam Asi" (Thou Art That).

According to the Upanishads, the reality of God can only be understood in a consciousness

of joy that is beyond ordinary consciousness. The silent voice of the eternal is perpetually whispering in us His melodies everlasting. The radiance of the Infinite is everywhere, but our ears cannot hear and our eyes cannot see. The eternal cannot be grasped by the transient senses or the transient mind. This is beautifully explained in the Taitriya Upanishad: "Words and the mind go to Him but reach Him not and return. But he who knows the joy of Brahman fears no more. Only the eternal, in us can lead us to the eternal. Only when the transient has become eternal, can a man say, 'I am He.' " Brahman is described as eminent and transcendent within all and outside all. If this all is imagined as a triangle, then the apex might be imagined as God transcendent who, in His expansions, creates matter out of Himself and not out of nothing, thus becoming eminent until the end of evolution, when the eminent again becomes transcendent in an essential of evolution towards it.

Why for the joy of creation? Why is there evil? For the joy of good arising from it. Why darkness? That light may shine more. Why suffering? For the instruction of soul and the joy of sacrifice. Why the infinite play of creation? For 'anandam', for

pure joy. In the rising from non-self to self, unconsciousness to consciousness, there is a process of unselfishness. The more the lower self is forgotten in good work and in the realisation of the beautiful and the truth, the faster becomes the process of evolution. The self-training for the vision of the unity of Atma and Brahman is called Yoga. Later on, it was developed with such a wealth of details and observations that its study should offer much interest even to the western psychologists.

In the Upanishads, one finds the conception of a four-stage consciousness above waking, dreaming and deep sleep. The law of evolution, called the Karma, explains the apparent injustice in the world with sublime simplicity. There is a law of cause and effect in the moral world. We are the builder of our own destiny and the results are not limited to one life. Since our spirit that is never born and will never die must come again and take to itself a body. So that the lower self may have the rewards of its work. Good shall lead to good, and evil to evil. From good, joy shall come, and from evil shall come suffering. Thus the great evolution flows on towards perfection. Here in the Upanishads, there are two points

which need little concentration and thinking to gain knowledge. One is called personality and the second is the final union with Brahman. The vision of the Upanishads is based on a consciousness of our being in relation to the being of the universe.

Whatever may be the mental process of man upon this earth, he can never go beyond himself, his own consciousness, his own life. Could he think, if he were not alive? Each one of us is a centre of life as unique event in the universe and whatever our eternal relation to people and things may be, the absolute fact remains that we have to die our own death. In the Infinite struggle of man to know this world and the universe around him and also to know the mind that allows him to think, he comes before the simple fact that life is above thought. When he sees a fruit he can think about the fruit, but in the end he must eat it, if he wants to know the taste. The pleasure and nourishment he can get from eating the fruit is not an act of thought, if we consider that food is necessary for life, that food is something material and that we do not live in the world of spirits we may think on that basis. Thus, before man can enjoy life, he must eat and

be alive. This is true. Many in power, however, forget this truth and piously think that instead of bread they can give the stones of religious dogmas and pious consolation.

It is no wonder that thinkers arose in fury and prophetic indignation and believing that the material violence can only be fought by violence and power, they gave a material gospel of faith in life. Again the gospel of an external region based according to them on fanaticism and self-deception. Can we wonder, if a Jew wrongs a Christian, what is his humility, his revenge? If a Christian wrongs a Jew, what should his sufferings be, by Christian example? Why revenge? We thus have our own law, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth and violence against violence. This law is so much consciously or unconsciously accepted that when an historian writes about the past events of men or nations we often feel that he takes this law for granted, and he, therefore, does not write from that point of view which is love, which breaks our own law in that love which is infinite liberty.

A material view of the universe seems, therefore, quite possible; so much so that we might call it the general view of modern man ruled by a

modern mechanism based on scientific materialism. But is this all? Is a rationalistic interpretation of the universe quite reasonable? Is a scientific humanism quite human or quite scientific? The answer of the Upanishads is quite definite. The 'atma,' the mystery of our life, the right of our soul, the love which is the source of infinite joy, the vision of the good and beautiful which is the source of everything beautiful or good that man can create upon this earth, is something which is above reason and, therefore, it can never be attained by reasons alone. We hear the words of Upanishads: "He comes to the thought of those who know Him beyond thought, not to those who imagine. He can be attained by thought. He is unknown to the learned and known to the simple." Similar are the words of Jesus. The seeds of spiritual life cannot grow except you be converted and become as little children you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. The world of modern science is becoming more and more spiritual, but it is still concerned with matter. We are on the threshold of this great world of science. Who knows what wonders the mind of man will discover. But however, the far the mind of man can go, there will still be the

tremendous limitation as stated in the Taitriya Upanishads: "Words and mind go to Him but reach Him not and return. But he who knows the joy of Brahman fears no more," or in the words of the Kaushitaki Upanishad, "it is not thought which we should want to know, we should know the thinker."

A flower can be an object of trade, something to sell for money. This is its lowest value. It can also be an object of intellectual interest. But then it becomes an abstraction. From a purely intellectual point of view, a mental image may sometimes be more important than the flower, but to the soul the flower is an object of joy and to the poet it can be of beauty and truth, a window from which we may look in wonder into the beauty and truth of the universe and the truth and beauty in our own soul. All things on earth from a flower to a human being can be an object of love or contemplation, an object of intellectual interest and an object of possession. In the first case they give us the freedom of joy in the infinite; in the second, they give us the knowledge which is power and, in the third, they give us the chains that bind us to matter, drag us down to the darkness of death and to the misery of competi-

tion or selfish power instead of co-operation from unselfish joy.

Those three attitudes of mind, those three types of knowledge are well described in the Bhagavad Gita in chapter 18, verses 20–22 when one sees eternity in things that pass away and infinity in finite things, then one has poor knowledge, but if one merely sees the diversity of things with their divisions and limitations, then one has impure knowledge and if one selfishly sees a thing as if everything is independant of the one and the many than one is in the darkness of ignorance.

Our spiritual life must be a life of creation whether we are within a religion or outside it or against it. We can only live by faith, a burning faith in the spiritual values of life. This faith can only come from life, from the deep fountain of life within us, the 'atma' of the Upanishads, the 'nirvana,' the kingdom of heaven, a deep faith in life cannot be but spiritual. That is why the faith in science and in man makes man speak of one for all and all for one. Man is to man a friend and a brother. Honesty and truthfulness, moral purity and modesty is a faith that cannot be material because it comes from the spirit within us. A

scientific humanism based on science if illumined by love and the light of beauty, is bound to lead to the 'atma' of the Upanishads to the glory of the spirit in man. The path of truth may not be a path of parellel lines, but a path that follows one circle. By going to the right and climbing the circle or by going to the left and climbing the circle we are bound to meet at the top, although we started in apparently contrary directions. This is bound to be in the end because truth is one. This is expressed in the Bhagavad Gita: "In the way that man love me, in the same way he shall find my love. For many are the parts of men, but they all in the end come to me."

There are two ideas around which the deepest problems of thoughts and all spiritual vision and life revolve: The idea of being and the idea of love. The central vision of the Upanishads is Brahman. Although Brahman is beyond thought and words, He can be felt by each one of us and 'atma,' as our own being. The answer of the Upanishads is 'yes.' That means the essence of the universe of ourself is positive. It is the holy word of the Upanishads, "OM," one of the meaning of which is "yes." How can we know? This truth can be known in the silence of the soul.

We are told again and again that in the deep silence of the soul, man can be in union with himself, not with his transitory consciousness, not with the apparent nothingness of deep sleep, not with the vagueness of dream but when the man is in union with himself, his own self. Only when man is in union with God is he in union with himself. One with himself and with all creations, then he sees by that inner light which is in the sacred place of his soul in that place where, in words of the Kethamendaka and the Vetasav-ratra Upanishad: "There the sun shines not, nor the moon, nor the stars. Lighting shines not there and much less earthly fire. From His light all these give light and His illumines all creations."

Then in the words of the Isha Upanishad: "The sun shall be no more, thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee, but the Lord shall be unto thee and everlasting light and thy God, thy glory."

The truely spiritual man is always poetical, the Lord wants to be worshipped in the beauty of holiness. The words of the prayer which Jesus taught, "hallowed be thy name," express this truth. This also reveals that the truely spiritual comes from the power of a high imagination, not

from weak, pious belief, nor from intellectual activities of the mind. Theology may help to make clear our thoughts but its relation to spiritual vision is that of the grammar to a living language or of poetics to soul-uplifting poetry.

The spiritual vision like the poetical vision, is not an analysis; it is not even a synthesis; it is the joy of truth revealed to a living soul. Every spiritual and poetical vision comes from imagination because imagination is the light of the soul. Without imagination, we cannot have faith, because faith is the substance of things hoped for. The evidence of the things not seen, of course, by reason, by the eyes of the body, but seen by the spirit. Without imagination, there is no vision and no creation. Most of the miseries of men such as selfishness, injustice and cruelty have their root in the lack of imagination. But imagination is not fancy. As Rabindranath Tagore says, the stronger is the imagination the less imaginary it is. Fancies disturb the mind and they may lead to destruction, but imagination is an inner light which with the help of reason leads to construction. All faith come from true imagination. But fancy or distorted imagination is the source of all fanaticism and superstition.

Since faith and fanaticism, imagination and fancy vision and superstition are so much intermingled in the history of religion, it is no wonder that those who, through lack of spiritual discrimination, cannot see the difference between faith and superstition may be bound by a merely external religion or condemn all religions. How can we know the true light of the higher imagination from the distorted, wondering of fancies? This is the task of a wisdom that is not taught in schools. We must watch and pray in order to find our path. When we watch in inner silence and our prayer is love, light shines. Since the light of our 'atma' is ever in us, just as in literary criticism, we slowly learn to distinguish true from false and good from the less good, our spiritual criticism can be developed so that we can distinguish true spiritual values from their imitation, and then we can choose the guides of our spiritual life.

The Upanishads and all great spiritual masters warned us of wrong teachers. "He cannot be taught by one who has not reached Him," says the Katha Upanishad. Similarly, Jesus repeatedly warned us against false teachers and fancies: if the blind leads the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. All help from outside whether from books

or from masters must pass the test of our reason and of our own spiritual watch and prayer. A master is even in us as Ramanuja says, "Thou my mother and my father thou, thou my friend and my teacher thou, thou my wisdom and my riches thou, thou are all to me, Oh God of all gods." From the idea of Brahman found in its most pure form in the oldest Upanishad, we find in the Isha Upanishad and especially in the Vatasvatra Upanishad, an evolution of idea of God which afterwards to be developed in full splendour in the Bhagavad Gita, when Krishna speaks to Arjuna and says that by love he knows me in truth, who I am and what I am, and when he knows me in truth, he enters into my being. Krishna uses the sanskrit word, "Visavtra Tat Antantaram," enter into that is My eternal being." That reminds us of Tat Tavam Asi, That thou Art, of the Upanishads. The suggestion that Brahman is the being of God, even as God is the centre of our being. God beyond creation is Brahman. Brahman in the universe is God. In the first case Brahman is beyond the historical ever-changing process of the universe. Even as our 'atma' is beyond our childhood, youth and old age, as the Gita says.

Secondly, Brahman is the God of the universe ever-watching and helping the work of creation. The God who is in the centre of our hearts who we can love and, what is even more wounderful, whose love we can feel but which cannot be defined. The words of Lao-tzu remind us of this truth. Now hear the poet, Lao-tzu, who uses the word 'Tao.' Now you take 'Tao' as God or love as I am going to do. God is love or love is God. So you can use any word and it will fit. People think that God or love is foolishness, because it lacks definition. But God and love can be defined. It would be small and not great and if we want to argue about the nature of love, the word of Lao-tzu also comes to our mind when he says, "He who loves does not dispute, he who disputes does not love."

The light of truth is the end of journey. The path of the Upanishads is essentially the path of light, the consciousness of Brahman which is far beyond all mental consciousness. This has been considered in the Bhagavad Gita which is the gospel of love. The "Gyani," the man of vision, is placed above all men because, as Krishna says, "The man of vision and I are one," "Gyani tavat ma vami mantam." By love the full communion

of man has taken place when he sees God in all, and all in river of life, and has heard the songs of immortality welcoming him. This is what all the masters of the spirit tell us.

When the end of wisdom is described in the Bhagavad Gita, some of the words of the Isha Upanishad are used. " Now I shall tell thee of the end of wisdom, when a man knows this he goes beyond death. It is Brahman beginningless, Supreme, beyond what is and beyond what is not. He is invisible. He is far and He is near. He moves and He moves not. He is within all and He is outside all. He is the light of all lights which shines beyond all darkness. It is vision, the end of vision to be reached by vision, dwelling in the heart of all."

So this particular description of Brahman, God or Allah, you will also find in the Holy Koran.

In the full spirit of the Upanishads, the Gita says in words sublime: "He who sees that the Lord of all is ever the same in all. That is, immortal in the field of mortality, He sees the truth. When a man sees that the God in himself is the same God in all that is, he hurts not himself by hurting others. Then he goes, indeed to the highest part."

In the same way, love is undefinable; but we know love is joy, not indeed a transient pleasure, but an eternal joy of the soul. The Katha Upanishad speaks of the two paths: there is a path of joy and there is a path of pleasure. Both attract the soul. The two paths lie in front of man pondering on them. The wise choses the path of joy; the fool takes the path of pleasure. One of the task of education is to reveal the joy of the infinite which is the joy of love. It is well expressed in the Chhandogya Upanishad: "Where there is creation there is progress. Where there is no creation there is no progress. Know the nature of creation. Where there is joy there is creation, where there is no joy there is no creation. Know the nature of joy. Where there is the infinite there is joy. There is no joy in the finite." All true progress is an inner creation that leads to the joy of infinite when in the progress of our soul the God of love is found then the words of the Sufi also come true. Sheikh Shadi, the Sufi Saint says: "In this world I feel joyful because He is the source of joy and I am in love with all creation because He is the Creator. I shall drink with joy the cup of sorrow because my beloved is the cup-bearer. I will bear pain with gladness because through Him I shall be healed."

A song of love is heard as a background to all prayers. Chaitanya, the great Indian mystic, pours out his heart in these words: "I pray not for wealth, I pray not for honours, I pray not for pleasures or even the joys of poetry. I only pray that during all my life I may have love: I may have pure love to thee."

In the Maytri Upanishad, we find a striking passage that says that the idea of rebirth or reincarnation had already found a spiritual interpretation. Samsara, the transmigration of life, takes place in one's mind. Let one, therefore, keep the mind pure, for what a man thinks that he becomes. From a spiritual point of view, what matters is not transmigration or an after-death; what matters is immortality and this is not a long life or many lives or a life after-death. Immortality is 'atma,' the spirit of eternity, within our mortal body. In our mortal consciousness in God, there is immortality beyond the birth and rebirth of life. That is why the spiritual masters always give us a sense of practical wisdom when they do not want words, they seek life immortal.

When an Indian sage was asked what is death? He answered, "I should ask what is life?" Kabir expressed these thoughts in his simple and

sublime way, "Oh friend, hope for Him whilst you live. Know whilst you live. Understand whilst you live. For in life deliverance abides. If your bonds be not broken whilst you live, what hope of deliverance is there in death. It is but an empty dream that the soul shall have union with Him because it has passed from the body. If He is found now, He is found then. If not, we do but go to dwell in death."

Yet this love which is the joy of the infinite, the 'ananda' of Brahman, this love that is God is here and now has been explained in the Taitriya Upanishad. Briguvaruni asked his father to explain to him the mystery of Brahman, the mystery of the universe. His father speaks to him of the earth, and the food of the earth, of life and the breathe of life, of the mind and of reason and of consciousness behind reason and mind. In the end, Briguvaruni saw the truth expressed in these words sublime and then he saw that Brahman was joy; for, from joy all beings have come; by joy they all live and unto joy they all return. God is love and love is joy. All the universe has come from love and unto love all things return. Those who found light and love give us their help for our journey. They speak to us of a path.

According to the Katha Upanishad, the path is narrow as the edge of a razor, or in the words of Jesus, 'narrow is the way which leadeth unto life.' Yet they all tell us that this narrow path leads to infinite freedom. Every step of light and love is a step towards a new life, a new view from the path that leads up to a mountain. The narrow path leads us safely through the jungle of life.

We find in the Upanishads more inspiration than definite teaching. But we find the beginning of Yoga in that communion of love, which was going to be the main subject of the Bhagavad Gita, and of a vast spiritual literature in India. Thus the Katha Upanishad tells us that when the five senses and the mind are still and reason itself rests in silence, then begins the path supreme. This calm steadiness of the sense is called Yoga. Then one should become watchful because Yoga comes and goes. In those two verses there is a suggestion of prayer of recollection as described by St. Theresa, "leading to the prayer of quiteness and the final prayer of unio: ."

In the Vetasavtra Upanishad you find verses that sound very similar to those found in chapter six of Bhagavad Gita "with upright body, head and neck lead thė mind and its power into the

heart and the 'OM' of Brahman will be thy boat with which to cross the rivers of fear." The 'OM' of Brahman is here the love of God. In the Gita devotion to Krishna, to God is the chief means of concentration and signs of the soul is described in an image of beauty. The soul is a lamp whose light is steady for it burns in a shelter where no winds come.

The words of the Upanishads are far above than those of writers on Yoga. Analysis is, of course, necessary, since by analysis we observe and collect and classify. In fact, we become clearly conscious of what may be a vague, general impression. But we can only analyse by making abstraction and we must even return to life. Many intellectual books could be written on love by a man of keen intellect, but they would be merely books and the writer might never have felt a flash of universal love. Most works on Yoga, beginning with the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, those short definitions and rules worked out by a supremely great analytical mind have their use, but we cannot see a country by merely looking at maps of a country. We cannot go on a journey if we merely stop at reading guides about the journey. When the power of the intellect was

applied to the spiritual ideas of the Upanishads and the Gita, it was found that there is a close relationship between the mind and the body. That certain postures of the physical body help concentration and others hinder it. That our breath varies with our emotion and that a deep, quiet breath is a reflection of a quiet mind. Then the elaborate rules found in the teachings of Yoga were composed. All these teachings can be useful, but they can mislead a most sincere seeker of a spiritual goal, because the path is the path of love, of love that leads to light once a single place of love or light has illumined our darkness, there is one and only one thing to do.

We have already read in the Bhagavad Gita that a man must be the same in heat or in cold, in pleasure or in pain, in victory or in defeat. The meaning is, of course, that whatever may be the events of our outer or inner life, we must forever have the peace of love. In fact, our life should perpetually breathe the air of love. Since love is the living breath of soul, it is that love which leads to that sublime state, described in Bhagavad Gita. He is the greatest Yogi whose vision is one when the pleasure and pain of others is his own pleasure and pain. Although love is the very first

condition for entering the path, how can the waters of love be given to one who is not thirsty? That is why we find that meditation, longing and sorrow are the first prayers of the soul, as the harts panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, Oh God. My soul is a thirst for God, for the living God when shall I come and appear before God.

In the spirit of this longing, we find the lovely prayer of Rabindranath Tagore; "Day after day, Oh Lord of my life, shall I stand before Thee with folded hands, Oh Lord of all worlds, shall I stand before Thee face to face under Thy great sky in solitude and silence, with humble heart shall I stand before Thee face to face in this laborious world of Thine tumultous with toil and with struggle among hurring clouds shall I stand before Thee face to face and when my work shall be done in this world, Oh King of kings alone and speechless shall I stand before Thee face to face."

There may be moments of dissolution on the path of love. But if even Jesus could say, "my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," need we be afraid? The words of a Hebrew prophet, Habaku, gives expression to this

thought: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the wines, the labour of the olives shall fail, and the fields shall yield not meat, the flock shall be cut off from the field and there shall be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." When this power of self-control, intelligence and mental energy are at the service of a good cause, at the service of love then a man can make quick progress on the path that leads to Brahman. When mental power, energy and self-control are not at the service of good cause, then history, literature, wisdom and the daily action of the present world tell us what are the results of an interest in Yoga, in miracles or in psychic powers not based on that humbleness of soul which is the beginning and end of all true spiritual light. Love is at its best in something of scientific interest and at its worst in pride and desire for power, which are the surest sign of spiritual darkness. Those who rely on physical miracles to prove the truth of spiritual things forget the ever-present miracle of the universe and our own lives. The lover of the physical miracles is, in act, a materialist. So please understand this. Instead of making materialistic things spiritual as the poet

or the spiritual man does, a exponent of physical miracles simply makes spiritual things material. This is the source of all idolatry and superstitions. Living aside the question that matters and spirit may simply be the different modes of degree in perfection of common substratum as Colary says; or as the Upanishads suggest there is a far greater question that in everything spiritual there is an element of beauty which is truth and which we find in faith but which is free from fanaticism and superstition.

The noble longing for truth of the scientist is exactly the same as the longing of the spiritual man for God, because God is truth. The difference is that the scientist is busy finding facts in the outer world, whether in the stars that are billions of light years from our little earth, or in the world discovered by the microscope. While the spiritual man is trying by the experience of being and of love to find the truth of his inner world, and in the inner world of us all. The external events of the world and the inner events of our minds are spiritually all external to our 'atma', to our higher self. They are things happening in time and space..The nearer we are to that centre in us which is beyond time and space, the better

can we watch those events and say they happen. As the Gita tell us, or as Jesus sums up, in the eternal words, watch and pray. According to the mystic it is important to know in prayer the difference between meditation and contemplation. Meditation is a movement of thoughts limited within a circle, but in contemplation there is a silence of thought. Meditation is the mental activity of the thinker, contemplation is the silence of the poet.

St. Peter of Ankartara, the Spanish saint, who helped St. Theresa, tells us what is the difference between the two. "In meditation, we consider carefully divine things and we pass from one to another, so that the heart may feel love. It is as though we should strike a flint to draw a spark of fire. But in contemplation, the spark is struck, the love we were seeking is there, the soul enjoys silence and peace not by many reasoning, by simple contemplation of truth. Meditation is the means, contemplation is the end. The one is the path, the other is the end of the path, even as the ship is still and at rest, when it has arrived in port. When the soul has reached contemplation through meditation, it should cease its toils and inquiries and be one in the feeling of love and

wonder of joy. Let a man return into his own self and there in the centre of his soul let him wait from a high tower as though he had God in his heart, as though in the whole creation there was only God and his soul. It has been said that prayer is perfect when he who prays remembers not that he is praying."

Among the sacred books of the pasts, the Upanishads can be called in truth Himalayas of the soul. Their passionate wondering of discovery to find that the sun of the spirit is in us from whom we have the light of our consciousness and the fire of our life, the greatness of their questions and the sublime simplicity of their answers, the radiance of joy when the revelation of the supreme comes to the soul and one of the poets can say "the light of the sun is my light" their paradoxes and contradictions where you find the living truth.

The simple stories are with concrete examples. The greatest metaphysical truths are explained in the language of a child the freshness of vision that reveal to us the infinite greatness of our inner will, their great variety and yet the absolute unity in the all-inspiring conception o Brahman. Their burning uplifting faith in the soul

of man which is one with the soul of universe. Their tolerance of the Vedas, but their spiritual and, therefore, symbolic interpretation of external rituals, thus showing the true path of spiritual uplift of all men in times to come. Their seeds of great psychologicl and physiological ideas, the vast harmonies that rang through their words, their spiritual wisdom that can satisfy different minds in their search of light. The simple images which we find again in saints and poets of other ages who had never known of the Upanishads and thus confirm to us the unity of all spiritual vision of light. The splendour of the romantic imagination that makes the creators, brothers in spirit with the Creator of beauty of all times and which shows us how to make our life a work of beauty all like trumpets sounding, the glory of light and love and over the darkness of doubts and death proclaiming the victory of life.

I have given you the summary of the Upanishads. I am sure you must have come across many things which you may not be knowing. I am sure that through the teachings of the Upanishads, many people who may have been misguided can come to the right path that leads to light.

The Nameless One

TO know one who has no name, and is absolute and without any adjectives or adjuncts, and beyond any conception or imagination, cannot be known merely by saying that He is this object or that. He is absolute and infinite.

It is said in the Brahadarnayaka Upanishad: "This universe was then unmanifested. It manifested itself only as name and form. So even now the universe is manifested only as name and form. This (Supreme) self has penetrated into all these bodies up to the nail-ends just as razor lies in its case, or as fire died in the source. People do not realise it for it is incomplete (when viewed as doing particular functions).

"The face (real nature) of the Satya Brahman is covered (as it were) by a golden vessel. O, nourisher, take it away so that I, who am identified with the Satya-Brahman, may see (the face). O, nourisher, O, Solitary Traveller, O, Controller, O, Sun, remove thy rays. Reduce thy radiance I would see that form of Thine which is most auspicious. I am that (solar) being, (when my body falls) may my vital force go to the immortal

cosmic vital force, and this body reduce to ashes, (go to the earth). O, fire, whose symbol is Om, O deity of resolution, recollect (my) actions, O Fire, lead us along the superior way for the attainment of our desserts. O Lord thou art aware of all our mental states. Remove us from the treacherous evil. We offer Thee profuse expressions of salutation."

So it is rightly said by Lord Krishna: "Even the devotees of the shining ones, who worship full of faith, they also worship Me (not knowing when), O, son of Kunti! though contrary of the ancient rule."

And I end with the sayings of Swami Sambodhananda: "The Lord is nowhere but within us. Our calm and pure mind, our thoughtless mind, can find it and realise it. 'Thou art that' and there is nothing else beyond Brahman."

The Meaning of Oneness

GOD inspired me regarding my mission of oneness, and helped me to find and collect what He has already given in his older scripture beginning about 4000 years ago and down to the last sculpture given some 1400 years ago.

The Rig Veda says that the soul of the poet is one with the God he is praising. We often find a sense of oneness as if there were one God above all the gods. As and when we weigh the word, Kharuna, the mercy of God, we find in the Rig Veda: "We praise Thee with our thoughts, Oh God. We praise Thee even as the sun praises Thee in the morning. May we find joy of being Thy servants. Keep us under Thy protection. Forgive our sin and give us Thy love. God made the rivers to play. They feel no weariness. Death is not from flowing. They fly swiftly like birds in the air. May the stream of my life flow into the river of righteousness, lose the bones of sins that bind me, let not the thread of my song be cut while I sing and let not my work end before its fulfillment."

So, this the beginning of those scriptures called the Vedas in which it has been mentioned

that only God, the oneness of God, and God among the gods, so he is the only one God of our creation and of our earth and heaven. Then later on, some sages and saints developing the thoughts of the Vedas, wrote the Upanishads.

Now you will be interested to know that after the Vedas how the Upanishads clarified everything. It has been mentioned in the Holy Koran that there is only one God and there is no companion to Him, but it does not mean that God, who has sent the chosen and beloved ones in the form of human beings to show to you the right path should be compared with them. We must not do so, because God is the Master of the whole universe. He is the Creator of us all. His creations are even those beloved ones whom He has sent to you. So do not compare God with them. But love them. Give them reverence.

To my joy, I found this teaching even in the Hindu Shashtras which are supposed to be over 4000 years old, the Vedas and the Upanishads. Out of the Upanishads, one part came as a scripture called the Bhagavad Gita.

So I am going stage by stage. The Rig Veda tells us that there is only one God and the way it praises and thanks Him for giving all things like

sun, water and air to whom also we should not be ungrateful but should always have reverence for them though they are the creations of God but we are obliged to them for providing us the things through which we exist. So the Parsis, the followers of Zorashtra, pay homage to the sun, air and water, because this prophet taught that if there was no sun how could man exist. If there was no air, no water, how could man exist? So, first man must be grateful to them, and through greatfulness the creator of man and the sun will be pleased and ultimately it will be the glory of the absolute, the Supreme Spirit, whom we call by different names.

Similarly, in the Koran, God has said that one must not compare Him with anybody "I am all alone." But it does not mean that those whom He had sent to guide you to the right path, you should not be grateful to them. You should not be obedient to them. You should not have reverence for them. And if you do not have all these, then you will not be near God or you will never be His friend.

So, those things sent by nature also are to be given reverence. Those who have come in a body form, so that we can see them and who can

show us the practical path to salvation, we must show reverence to them, but the only thing that we must not forget is the One who has sent everything for our happiness. He is Almighty God who is called by various names.

So I have given some slokas from Rig Veda which mentions about the praise of God, the only God. But people may be confused during the period of the Upanishads, I will thus recite from one of the sections of the Upanishads regarding Almighty God that it will clarify your doubts regarding other things too, like in those days whom people were considering God they themselves made us understand that above them there is a Supreme Spirit whom we call by different names. He is the Creator of them all as well as of us. Now the Kena Upanishad will clarify this explanation. It says once upon a time Brahman, that is God the Spirit Supreme, won a victory for the gods and the gods thought in their pride that they alone attained this victory. Theirs alone was the glory.

Brahman, the Spirit Supreme of God or Allah, saw it and appeared to them but they knew not. "Who is that being that fills us with wonder," they cried. They spoke to Agni, the God of fire: "Oh

God all-knowing, go and see who is that being that fills us with wonder." Agni ran towards Him and Brahman asked: "Who are you?" "I am the God of fire," said the God who knows all things. "What power is in you?" asked Brahman, the only God. "I can burn all things on earth," he said. Brahman placed a straw before him and said, "Burn this." The God of fire tried with all his powers, but he was unable to burn it. He then returned to all the other gods and said he could not find out who that being was that fills them with wonder.

Then they spoke to Vayu, the God of the air: "Oh Vayu, go and see who is that being that fills us with wonder." Vayu ran towards him and Brahman asked, "Who are you?" "I am Vayu, the God of air." "What power is in you," asked Brahman. "In a whirlwind, I can carry away all there is on earth." Brahman, that is God, placed a straw before him saying blow that away. The God of the air tried with all his power but was unable to move it. He returned to the other gods and said he could not find out who that being that fills us with wonder was.

Then the God spoke to Indra, the God of thunder. "Oh, giver of earthly goods, go and see

who is that being that fills us with wonder." And Indra ran towards Brahman, the Spirit Supreme, the Allah, God, but he disappeared. Then in the same region of the sky Indra saw a woman of radiant beauty. She was Uma, divine wisdom, the daughter of the mountain of eternal snow. "Who is that being that fills us with wonder," he asked. The divine Uma said that He was Brahman, the Spirit Supreme, and rejoice in Him since through Him you attained the glory of victory. The gods, Agni, Vayu and Indra, excel the other gods, for they were the first who came near God and they first knew He was the Spirit Supreme and thus Indra, the God of thunder, excels all other gods for he came nearest to Brahman and he first knew that He was the Spirit Supreme. Concerning whom it is said He is seen in the nature in the wonder of flash of lightning. He comes to the soul in the wonder of flash of vision. His name of Tadvanamam which translated means the end of longing, because as Tadvanamam he should have adoration, as all beings will love such a lover of the Lord. This shows that this the teaching of the Upanishads from the Kena Upanishad. So, what we learn from Rig Veda is clarified in the Upanishads, as the

people were thinking that they were gods. They actually were the beloved of God and the Upanishads clarified this.

From this I can prove that what Hindu religion says is the same as what is said in the Holy Koran. Unfortunately, neither the Muslims nor the Hindus have studied the original scriptures. If they would have done so, there would not have been any enmity or hate between them. Still it is not too late. If we can bring determination in our hearts, then I think we all can still stay peacefully and prove to the world that here is a place where men can get peace. An evil man can become good, a man who becomes good gets peace and when he gets peace, he becomes free and when he becomes free he makes others free.

Now we come to the Bhagavad Gita. When Lord Krishna speaks to Arjuna which you will find in the Holy Bhagavad Gita, chapter 18, verse 55: "By love he knows me in truth who I am and what I am and when he knows me in truth he enters into my being." Then again Lord Krishna clarifies in chapter 13, verses 12, 15 and 17, "Now I shall tell thee the end of the wisdom. When a man knows this he goes beyond that it is Brahman beginningless; the Supreme; beyond what is

beyond what is not; he is invisible; he is far and he is near; he moves and he moves not; he is within all and he is outside all. He is the light of all lights which shines beyond all darkness. It is vision the end of vision to be reached by vision dwelling in the hearts of all."

Further, Lord Krishna says in Chapter 13, verses 27 and 28: "He who sees that the Lord of all is ever the same in all that is immortal in field of mortality he sees the truth and when a man sees that the God in himself is the same God in all that is, he hurts himself by hurting others, then he goes indeed, to the highest path. So what a beautiful teaching it is in which Lord Krishna makes us understand that in every soul there is a particle of God. That particle is in you: if you hurt others because that particle also which is with him is with you, you will be hurting your self. So if we learn this teaching from Lord Krishna, I think every human being, if he is determined and take it to his heart, then there will be no reason of fighting with each other on the excuse of religious beliefs. No religion has ever given you slightest hint to fight with other religion. So why should we fight and spoil the name of our religion in which we are born?

Now we will come to the scripture of Christianity, called the Holy Bible. Our masters of the spiritual life want us to be at least as practical to the work that leads to joy as others are practical in the work that leads to the illusion of self-exaltation. "Seek you first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you," says Jesus, whose words are truth. He also says, "Behold the kingdom of God is within you." We pray, Thy kingdom come and the kingdom of heaven is at hand. But we also pray, thy will be done and what is the will but the will of love. The truth of the spirit is not found by arguing the philosophical or metaphysical question. Then you will find a very high inspiration sung by St. Francis as far as God is concerned. "Glory be to thee, my God, for the gift of thy creation and specially for our brother the sun who gives us the day and by whom thou gives us light, he is beautiful and radiant and of great glory and bears witness to thee as most high. Glory be to thee my God, for our brother, the wind, and the air serene or in clouds and in all weather by which thou does sustain all creatures. Glory be to thee my God for our sister, water, which is very useful and humble and precious and pure. Glory be to thee

my God for our brother fire by whom thou does illumine the night and is beautiful and joyful and strong and full of power."

All religions are from one God. As the earth He created was so vast that He had to divide it in such a way so that all the creation should be guided properly, so the various prophets, messiahs and avatars who were sent to different parts of the earth, to teach the people of that land according to their language, customs and tradition and show them the right path. These religions are nothing but instruments for civilizing you, to keep you on the correct path so that you may not fall in the dark pit.

Then each religion was given a scripture, so that even after thousands of years people can benefit and learn from it. So when the last religion and scripture were sent to the people of Arabia, it was called Islam and the scripture the Holy Koran. Our teachers of the previous religions did not clarify and make us understand that we are from one God and all these gods and avatars are beloved ones of God. They are bound to get reverence but they cannot be compared with God. That message was given in Islam. So even you are from any other religion, it is your

duty to respect other religions which are also sent by our own Master. And if you fail to do so, you will not be near Him but far away from Him. Though you may be following the religion in which you are born perfectly, yet you will be very far from Him and, today, we see with our own eyes that anybody can challenge that any person or any nation who belongs to a particular religion is happy. Every one is in turmoil. Are Hindus happy? Are they not fighting among themselves? Are not Harijans Hindus? Are not buddhists Hindus? Their philosophies are the same. And in spite of that they are fighting among themselves not for the sake of God but for the sake of greed and lust. You can see the same in Christianity. Both Protestant and Catholics are claiming Christ and they are the worst enemies of each other. They try to degrade each other. They try to destroy each other. They fight not for their Lord Jesus but for their own greed and power. So you see many European countries are not in peace. Every moment passes in tension.

Then you come to Islam. Though Sunnis and Shias believe in the Holy Prophet, they try to pretend that they love the Holy Prophet, through whom try to love God, but not sincerely from their

hearts. If they are trying to show that they are the staunch believers of Islam, whom I shall call the fanatics, they do not love Islam, because for the sake of Islam they have no courage to sacrifice their body, life, soul or wealth.

For their lust and greed, they exploit innocent children of Islam and the result is Muslims fight Muslims which you see often not only in India but in many countries as well. The Shias and the Sunnis fight though they claim themselves to be the followers of Islam and the followers of the Holy Prophet. There are so many Islamic states all over the world and today some of these states are supposed to be the wealthiest in the world. Still, may I ask, are they happy? Are they not all the time in tension? Are they not afraid? For are they not preparing themselves by buying deadly weapons to destroy each other? You can see how Iran and Iraq are fighting. Are they not followers of Islam and followers of Holy Prophet Mohammed? Still they kill each other mercilessly because of craving for power and lust.

So my children, though I know some people say that Baba is alone fighting for the cause and ask: How can your message reach to the entire world?

But I say He has sent me to propagate the gospel of love, unity, oneness and not to separate people from their religions. Remain in your own religion but love others and their religions because their religions and your religion are sent by your and their God who is only one and the same God. So in the beginning people were always trying to discourage me but by the help of Almighty and my faith in Him I did not lose hope and today I know several lakhs appreciate my views. Not only appreciate but also try to work it out practically. They try to explain to others and in this way the mission is progressing. My only wish is that all the children who appreciate Babaji's views, should dedicate their service to the cause of humanity without having any discrimination of caste, creed or religion. If they love him, if they appreciate him, I will appeal to them to pray to Almighty God according to their religion, to pray to their prophets, avatars, messiahs, to pray through them to God to give me strength and to give me enough time so that I can fulfill the work, for which He has sent me.

So my children I end the discourse of today trying to prove oneness of all religions.

Muharram

I am inspired to clarify certain points regarding Holy Prophet Mohammed, the founder of Islam. He was ordered at the age of 40 to declare himself a prophet and messenger of God. The people of Arabia were barbarious; they were idol worshippers of the worst type. They kept statues of nude women and prayed to them as godesses, calling them daughters of gods. To teach them and make them give up such practices, Holy Prophet Mohammed was sent.

His wife, Bibi Khatija, was his first follower among the women. Among the elderly men, Hazrat Abubakr Siddiq was the first. Among the youths his cousin, Hazrat Ali, was his first follower. Then later on Hazrat Osman and Hazrat Omar became the constant companions of the Holy Prophet. Eventually, Hazrat Ali married the Prophet's daughter, Bibi Fatima, and they had two handsome sons. As far as the Prophet's family is considered, it consists of the Prophet himself, his daughter, Fatima, his grandsons, Hussain and Hassain, and his son-in-law as well as cousin, Hazrat Ali. As far as his companions were concerned, Abubakr Siddiq, who gave his

favourite and the youngest daughter to the Holy Prophet after the death of his beloved wife, Bibi Khatija, was the closest. Then the next companions were Hazrat Osman and Hazrat Omar. He remained in the world for 14 years after becoming a messenger of God. In other words, he passed away at the age of 54.

During these 14 years, he could muster a big number of his followers before his death. Every messenger is informed before hand when God takes him back so that he could give his teaching to his followers. So when Holy Prophet Mohammed was asked by God's angels whether he was ready to accompany him to God, the Holy Prophet naturally willingly agreed. But before departing he called all his followers from all parts of Arabia and made them understand that the administration of the state has nothing to do with religion. So he declared that after his death people have to choose one of his followers to rule the state. So as far as religion was concerned, he recommended that his relatives were the proper persons to guide the people. They should look after the spiritual side. And those who would be chosen to rule the country would look after the administrative side of the state.

So after Holy Prophet Mohammed's passing away, his followers assembled in a mosque. At the gathering, four names were proposed. The names were of Abubakr, Osman, Omar and Hazrat Ali. They were made to sit in a line and whoever wanted to chose his leader has to stand before him. In whose front the longest of the line was formed was declared as the ruler of Islamic state. He was called the Khalifa. The first Khalifa was Abubakr. After his death Hazrat Osman was eleced. But after Osman was assassinated, Hazrat Omar was elected. And once again Hazrat Omar was assassinated, Hazrat Ali was elected. Among the four Khalifas, Hazrat Ali was the last Khalifa. He too was assassinated in a mosque. Then again the election took place. Mohavia who was very fond of the Holy Prophet and who his close devotee was elected as the ruler of the state.

After some time, he became selfish and his desire was to abolish elections and establish family rule. He declared that after his death, his son, Yajid, would become the ruler. By that time, Mohavia had many supporters and friends. The army was on his side. Even then if there was a fair election, then Imam Hussain, a son of Hazrat Ali

would have won, thus becoming both the spiritual as well as the ruling head.

But he was not interested in materialistic world. He wanted to create a spiritual foundation of Islam. Hence he did not contest. Yajid was declared the ruler. Imam Hussain stayed in Medina.

From the beginning, Yajid was a spoiled child. When he was elected the ruler, he began indulging in the worst vices, which were prohibited in the Holy Koran.

He was a debauch. He was cruel. He was a womaniser. He was a drunkard. And he oppressed the poor. So, the people of Yajid went on a deputation to Imam Hussain, who was in Medina. The deputation told him that the one who has been declared the ruler was not following the rules of the Koran, and was not at all afraid of God. On hearing this, Imam Hussain agreed that he would come and warn Yajid. If he did not listen, then he would fight a battle against him. The people of Yajid assured Imam Hussain that there was no need to bring any people from Medina or Mecca, because the entire population of Yajid would join Hussain in the battle field of Karbala. On receiving the assurance of the people

of Yajid, he decided not to take any army but go with his family because it has been mentioned in the Holy Koran that those who would fight in God's name to bring glory to His name, they would be His dearest. So Imam Hussain who was not a greedy person felt that he should take his entire family and risk their lives jointly in the name of God, so that God should be pleased. And his grandfather, Holy Prophet Mohammed's soul would also be happy. With this in mind, he took all his family members, numbering 72, and went towards Iran where the capital was. Imam Hussain reached Karbala maidan. He then sent his embassy to Yajid and warned him, giving him chance that if he promises to rule the country according to the Koranic laws ordained by God then Imam Hussain would go back. Otherwise, he would declare war against him. Yajid refused and told Imam Hussain that it was better for him to go back to Medina. Yajid told him that it would be foolish to fight with him as Imam Hussain was having with him only few members of his family. This was so because by the time Imam Hussain arrived at the maidan of Karbala not a single person from the Yajid region joined him. Imam Hussain was all alone. Imam Hussain

also realised that he had no chance of survival.

Here the foundation of Islam is laid through Imam Hussain. Even though knowing full well that he had no chance against the cruel enemy who ha gone against the faith of Allah he refused his suggestion and again warned him, the second time, that he should change his behaviour and rule according to the Koranic laws. Yajid again refused. Imam Hussain sent his messenger the third time. The one who went did not return, as he was killed by Yajid with the warning that he was prepared to fight.

In Imam Hussain's family there were half a dozen elderly persons and the rest were young people and some women. The elders first took up the fight. They fought valiantly. Even the mighty force of Yajid found it very hard to fight back in the same manner. They sent a message to King Yajid that even the elders were too difficult for them, and though they were being hurt yet their spirit was so high that they were not dying but were fighting. Thus the fight went on for nearly five days. Then one of the ministers of Yajid advised the King that why not surround them from all sides so that they could not get any food from any place, nor could they

get any water to drink. During these five days, that is last five days, one by one the members of Imam Hussain's family passed on to be near to Almighty God. In this way the fight went on. All the major family members who could fight fell and some died because of thirst and hunger. The only male member left to fighting was Imam Hussain himself. The other male was the youngest of them all, a baby, who in later life became known as Zain-ul-Aabidin. It was the nineth day, though Imam Hussain was badly wounded and not a single part of his body was free from wounds, the soldiers of Yajid were tired of fighting and fear came into them that they could not defeat or kill Imam Hussain.

In those days the rule was that at the time of prayer fighting must cease. One of the officers of Yajid decided that they had no chance unless they killed Imam Hussain when he stood up for his prayer. So when the time for prayer came, the fighting ceased. In the battlefield Imam Hussain started his prayers. When he bowed down and touched his head to the ground, an enemy soldier jumped on him and beheaded him. And in this way, he gave his last breath in honour of God, in faith of God. After he was beheaded, his

head was carried to the capital. The surviving members of his family along with the women belonging to the family and only one male child, a grandson of Hussain, were also taken to Yajid.

When he was satisfied that Imam Hussain was dead and there was no danger to him, he allowed the women to go back to Medina, mainly to remind the people of Medina and Mecca how strong Yajid was and whoever would defy him would have the same punishment as Imam Hussain. The women reached Medina after three months. When the people of Medina saw that only the women of the family of Imam Hussain had come and not a trace to be seen of any male, except a small infant, they came to know the outcome of the battle between Imam Hussain and the cruel King Yajid. The people of Medina and of Mecca joined together, and marched to Iran to fight against Yajid. In no time the entire family of Yajid was wiped out. So too was his army. However, his subjects were saved. And after some years the remaining eight Imams became the heads of the spiritual life as well as the heads of the political side. After the passing away of the eleventh Imam, the kingship and monarchy system was introduced. Till that

time there was a system of election. In this way Imam Hussain laid an unshakable foundation of faith of Islam which even today, though 1400 years have passed since, provides the positive features of faith. So in reverence, instead of crying on these days, instead of mourning on these days, if I were you—and I do in these days—in reverence, in gratitude, in honour we should do good work, we should be humble, we should be kindhearted. If God has given us something, we should be generous to help the weaker people. We should not try to show off our wealth or our ego. We should be as humble as possible and, at the same time, during these days whenever we pray to Almighty God we should pray to bestow peace to the soul of Imam Hussain.

This is the story of Muharram according to your humble Baba, to whom it was taught in his meditation. Do not be sad. If you read the second chapter of the Holy Koran, the Sura Bakara, you will find a verse that is called Iyat, that was revealed to our Holy Prophet, which says: "Oh! My prophet tell your followers that those who have given their comfort, their everything in My name, they are not dead but they are alive."

So my children I have faith in the Holy Koran. I accept it. That is why I do not feel sad that Imam Hussain is dead. According to the Koran, he is alive though not in the bodily sense.

So here also it has been proved by the Islamic Scripture that the body is not what we call life. But life is nothing but the soul, and the soul is the part and parcel of the Almighty who is the creator, and we are His creations.

The body is made of dust. Ultimately it has to go from where it has come. But we know that the soul has come from Him, the Almighty, so automatically it goes to Him and never dies.

So my children, I do not feel sad, because I believe in the Koran. I have faith in it that our beloved Imam Hussain, though according to the materialistic way of thinking he is dead, yet I feel he is in existence. He is with us. If you keep faith in the reverence, we are sure that through him we shall secure the blessings of God.

Now let us consider the significance of Muharram. Let us remember that the first day of the Islamic new year is the first day of Muharram. Now every religion has a new year, which is celebrated with joy of divinity, with charity, with love. From this point of view the death of Imam

Hussain is not to be a day of sorrow, because who among men have the unique opportunity of laying down his life and those of his family members in order to bring honour and glory to the name of God! Such a man, as the Holy Koran says, can never die.

I hope from this you have learnt the real history of Muharram. I pray to God to give more divine enjoyment to our beloved Imam Hussain who in honour of God sacrificed not only himself but his entire family.

Holy Ramadhan

(A month of fasting based on the Holy Koran, Chapter II, verses 183–188)

THE Muslim fast is not meant for self-torture. Although it is stricter than other fasts, it also provides alleviation under special circumstances. If it were merely a temporary abstention from food and drink, it would be salutary to many people, who habitually eat and drink to excess. The instincts for food, drink and sex are strong in the animal nature and temporary restraint from all these enables the attention to be directed to higher things. This can be acquired through prayer, contemplation and acts of charity, not of the showing kind, but by giving to those who are really in need, in such a manner that the left hand would know what the right hand is doing.

Illness and journey must not be interpreted in an elastic sense: they must be such as to cause real pain or suffering, if the fast were observed. It is better to determine it, in each case according to circumstances.

The regulations are again and again coupled with an insistance on two things (a) the facilities and concession given (b) the spiritual signi-

ficance of the fast. Without this, it is like an empty shell without a kennel. If we realise this we shall look upon Ramadhan not as a burden, but as a blessing and shall be duly grateful for the lead given to us in this matter.

The verses 186 and 188 in the Holy Koran are not foreign to the subject of Ramadhan but emphasises its spiritual aspect. Here we are told of prayer and the nearness of God and in verse 188 we are asked not to "eat up" other people's substance.

Men and women are each other's 'garment', that is, they are mutual support, mutual comfort, and mutual protection fitting into each other as a garment fits the body. A garment also is both for show and concealment. The question of sex is always delicate to handle: Here we are told that even in such matters a clear, open, an honest course is better than fraud or self-deception. The sex instinct is classed with eating and drinking and other animal instincts to be restrained, but not to be ashamed of. The three things are prohibited during the fast by day, but permitted after the fast is broken at night till the next fast commences.

Those in touch with the nature know the

beautiful effects of early dawn. First appear thin white indefinable streaks of light in the east. Then a dark zone supervenes; followed by a beautiful pinkish white zone clearly defined from the dark. This is the true dawn that is after the first signs.

When the night appears; "till sunset", then the fast ends.

A visit to a mosque by night after the fast is broken is specially recommended, towards the end of Ramadhan too, so that all carnal temptations may be avoided.

Besides these three primal physical needs of man, which are apt to make him greedy, there is a fourth greed in society, the greed of wealth and property. The purpose of fasts is not completed until this fourth greed is also restrained. Ordinarily, honest men are content if they refrain from robbery, theft, or embezzlement. Two more subtle forms of the greed are, where one uses one's own property for corruption of others, or those in authority, so as to obtain some material gains even under the cover and protection of the law. The words translated "other people's property" may also mean "Public property". A still more subtle form is where we use our own property or property under our own control—

"among yourselves", in the text, for vain or frivolous uses. Under the Islamic standard this is also greed. Property carries with it its own responsibilities. If we fail to understand or fulfil them, we have not learnt the full lesson of self-denial by fasts.

Public Mosque

(Chapter II, verse 117, of the Holy Koran)

AND who is more unjust
Than he who forbids
That is place for the worship
Of God's name should be
Celebrated? — whose zeal
Is in fact to ruin them?
It was not fitting that such
Should themselves enter them
Except in fear. For them
There is nothing but disgrace
In this world and in the world
To come, an exceeding torment.

Explanation

This verse, taken in a general sense, establishes the principal of freedom of worship in a public mosque or place dedicated to the worship of God. This is recognised in Muslim Law. There may be differences of opinion between one individual and another, or between one group and another as to the nature of God or the proper

nor can one individual or sect include another. So long as a person enters reverently and does nothing outwardly to cause offence to the other worshippers, he has a right to go and worship in a public place set apart for God's worship.

Ababaji

The Koran: Introduction II

THE Koran being the scripture of one of the great faiths, even non-Muslim scholars, who have tried to translate it into English, have approached the task in the spirit of reverence. However careful and meritorious a translation may be, it can only go to a certain distance in helping to convey the meaning of a book so many-faced and rich in meaning as is the Koran. The main burden of the effort needed for the understanding of the Koran must be borne by the reader himself. The translator's part is to make the bearing of that burden easy, attractive and rewarding. One of the urgent, inescapable needs of today is that the Koran be widely read, pondered and accepted as a guide. The values inculcated by it need to be put into effect in our daily lives. This may be neglected only at direct peril. This is no longer hypothetical. We find ourselves in the midst of the peril which is advancing from many directions at accelerated speed.

This introduction is designed to serve as a key to the study of the Koran should itself be carefully studied. The reader will find that it does not spell

out anything in detail. It operates as a pointer for the reader's mind and beckons it on to an exercise, necessary and essential, for a profitable study familiarity with the style, diction, the method of persuasion and the manner of reasoning of the Koran. He will find this helpful when he enters upon a study of the Koran itself.

By equipping himself in advance with the help that the introduction is designed to furnish him, the reader will be in a better position to grasp the meaning of the Koran as he proceeds with his study. This study must in turn be pursued with the utmost attention and should be constantly repeated. To reap a full measure of benefit from it, the Divine Book must be wooed with the deligence, the devotion, the delicacy, the zeal, the reverence and the assiduity of the lover. The treasures of the Koran are inexhaustible.

It will be noted that every chapter of the Koran with the sole exception of the ninth, which some commentators have surmised is a continuation of the eighth chapter, opens with the invocation: "In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Even Merciful". The invocation is part of the revelation and is numbered as the first verse of each chapter, the succeeding verses being numbered

accordingly. This is the system followed in the Arabic text and the translation, and the reference set out in the introduction.

Some chapters, for instance the second, third, seventh, eleventh to fiteenth, etc. being with combinations of letters which follow immediately after the invocation. Commentators are not agreed upon their significance. The most acceptable explanation, which is offered on good authority and which has been adopted here, is that these are abbreviations of Divine attributes which are opposite to the subject matter of the chapter.

The Koran is verbal revelation and, thus, literally, the Word of Allah. The reader needs to keep in mind that it is Allah speaking. The pronouns I, We, Ours, Ourself, therefore, obviously refer to the Divine but often He, His, Him are also used to indicate the Divine, and there is constantly a transition from the first person to the third and vice versa. The Koran is extremely concise and is a masterpiece of condensation.

It leaves a great deal to the intelligence of the reader, urges reflection and appeals constantly to the undergoing. In the introduction, an effort has been made to induce in the mind of the

reader the attitude that would help him to make the most of the translation. The translation itself is so patterned as to help the reader in his effort to penetrate to the true meaning of the text. It is of the utmost importance that urged on by his own eagerness, he should succeed mainly through his own effort in his guest. Once he is convinced how richly rewarding that quest can be, he will find a vast domain opening out before him for his profitable exploration. He will be taken by the hand, by divine grace and mercy, and led into a universe of the spirit of unsuspected and exceeding charm and beauty.

Now let us start with the purpose of the Koran.

The purpose of the Koran is to furnish guidance to mankind so that they may be led along the path that would bring them to their Maker in a state of complete submission to Him, thus fulfilling the purpose of their own creation. This is a Book that We have revealed to thee that thou mayest bring mankind out of every kind of darkness into the light, by the command of their Lord, to the path of the Mighty, the Praiseworthy Allah, to Whom belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth. For that purpose, it draws attention to every type of phenomenon,

and thereby reveals vast treasures of profound thoughts. But all this is in pursuit of its appointed purpose, and must be viewed and appreciated in that context. For instance, the Koran makes numerous statements based on historical facts to emphasize different aspects of the guidance it sets forth, but it is not a book of history.

It draws attention to stages of creation of the universe which you will find it in chapter 21, verse 31, and of man which you will find in chapter 71, verse 15: chapter 32, verse 8, chapter 40, verse 68. But it is not a treatise on cosmology or on the origin of species.

He is the one who created the light and the day, and the sun and the moon, each gliding along its orbit, this you will find in chapter 21, verse 34. He created the sun and the moon and the stars, all made subservient to man by His command. Harken, His is the creation and its regulation. Blessed is Allah, the Lord of the worlds, that you will find in chapter 7, verse 55. He has constrained to your service the night and the day and the sun and the moon; and the stars too have been constrained to your service by his command. Surely, in all this there are Signs for a people who make use of their understanding

this, you will find in chapter 16, verse 13. Yet the Koran is not a primer on Astronomy.

It makes reference to the operation of the law which revives the dry earth through rain that you will find in chapter 7, verse 58 and to the wonderful system through which the supply of sweet and salt water is maintained in rivers and oceans this you will find in chapter 25, verse 54 and chapter 35, verse 13. But it is not a manual of meteorology or hydraulics.

Hė it is who has constrained the sea to your service that you may eat fresh seafood therefrom, and may take out therefrom articles that you wear as ornaments. Thou seest the vessels ploughing through it that you may voyage across the oceans seeking His bounty and that you may be grateful that you will find in chapter 16, verse 15. Yet it is not a volume of oceanography, nor a guide-book on pearl fishing or deep-sea fishing.

We created man from an extract of clay; then We placed him as a drop of sperm in a safe depository; then We fashioned the sperm into a clot; then We fashioned the clot into a shapeless lump; then out of this shapeless lump, We fashioned bones; then We clothed the bones with flesh· then We developed it into a new

creation. So blessed be Allah the Best of Creators. This you will find in chapters 23, verses 13–15. This was revealed close upon fourteen centuries ago, and yet the Koran is not a work on obstetrics.

It mentions that David and Solomon were taught the process of smelting iron and copper that you will find in chapter 34, verses 11–14, and this has recently been confirmed by the discovery of the site of the furnaces and the system employed for the purpose, but the Koran does not treat of metallurgy.

It warns that flourishing ancient civilizations, very much more advanced than that of Central Arabia of the early seventh century of the Christian era, were destroyed in consequence of the disobedience and wrong doing of the people This you will find in chapter 30, verse 10. This discovery of their remains in different parts of Arabia and of the rest of the earth has supplied confirmatory proof, but the Koran is no archaeological tome. It states that when the Pharoah who pursued Moses and the Israelites was about to be overwhelmed by the rising tide and beseeched God for mercy, he was told his last minute repentance could not avail him, but that: "We will grant thee a measure of deliverance by

preserving the body this day that thou mayest serve as a Sign for those who come after thee" This you will find in chapter 10, verse 93. This was confirmed by Egyptology. The prophecies contained in the Koran continue to be fulfilled in every age. All this is in support of the purpose of the Koran set out above.

Now in our introduction, we proceed with Method of Persuasion of the Koran. The Holy Koran adopts the most persuasive way of leading people, step by step, towards the highest grades of virtue and beneficence. The method adopted by it fills the heart with a deep appreciation of the concern of the Creator for His creatures, and pre-disposes one to respond with eager devotion and deep love.

The recompense of an injury is a penalty in proportion thereto, but whosoever forgives and effects a reform thereby, his reward is with Allah. Surely, he loves not the wrongdoers. No blame attaches to those who exact due retribution when they are wronged; blame attaches only to those who wrong others and transgress in the earth without justification. They will have a painful chastisement. But the wronged one who endures with fortitude and forgives, achieves a

matter of high resolve. This you will find in chapter 42, verses 41–44.

You will surely be tried in respect of your possessions and your persons and you will surely hear many hurtful things from those who were given the Book before you and from those who set up partners with Allah; but if you endure with fortitude and restrain yourselves, that indeed is a matter of strong determination. This you will find in chapter 3, verse 187.

If you desire to exact retribution, then adjust the penalty to the wrong you have suffered, but if you endure with fortitude, that surely is best for the steadfast. So thou endure with fortitude and thou canst do so only with the help of Allah; and grieve not for them, nor feel distressed because of their plottings. Surely Allah is with those who restrain themselves and those who are benevolent. This you will find in chapter 16, verses 127–129. Those who spend in prosperity and adversity, who control their tempers when they are roused and who overlook people's faults. Allah loves the benevolent. Those who, when they commit an indecency or wrong themselves, call Allah to mind and implore forgiveness for their sins and who can forgive sins except Allah?

And do not persist knowingly in that of which they have been guilty shall have as their reward rivers flow, wherein they shall abide. Excellent is the reward of those who work righteousness. This you will find in chapter 3, verses 135–137.

To forgive, when in anger, is a positive virtue. That you will find in chapter 42, verse 18. And so is the overlooking of a default or injury. Whether you make public a good deed or perform it secretly, or pardon a wrong, Allah is surely very forgiving and determines the measure of everything. This you will find in chapter 4, verse 150.

If you forbear and forgive and pardon, then surely Allah is Most Forgiving. Ever Merciful. This you will find in chapter 64, verse 15.

To withhold beneficency consequence of some default or the beneficiary may in turn disentail the withholding benefactor from becoming the recipient of Divine grace and mercy. Let not those who are possessed of means and plenty resolve to withhold their bounty from the kindred and the needy and those who have migrated from their homes in the cause of Allah because of some default on the part of the recipient. Let them forgive and forbear. Do you not desire that Allah should forgive you? Allah is Most Forgiving,

Ever Merciful. This you will find in chapter 24, verse 23.

When a loan is taken, the date of repayment should be agreed upon. If on the due date the debtor be in strained circumstances, then grant him respite in respect of the rapayment of the capital sum, till a time of ease. But if, in such a case, you remit the capital sum also as charity, it will be better for you, if you only knew. Be ever mindful of the day when you shall be made to return to Allah; when every one shall be paid in full that which he has earned, and they shall not be wronged. This you will find in chapter 2, verses 281 and 282. Prisoners of war are to be released as a favour or in return for ransom. This you will find in chapter 47, verse 5. Those who desire to pay off their ransom from their earnings may be given in writing to that effect, and they should be helped to secure their freedom with a portion of the wealth of Allah which he has bestowed upon you. This you will find in chapter 24, verse 34. So my children, one more thing which is important in the Holy Koran in my introduction is the graduation of moral values.

Indeed, a perfect gradation of moral values has been prescribed. Allah enjoins justice and

benevolence, and graciousness as between kindred: and forbides evil designs, ill behaviours and transgression. He admonishes you that you may take heed. That you will find in chapter 16, verse 91. On the negative side, not only must every kind of trespass against person, properly and honour be eschewed; but unmannerly behaviour and evil thoughts and designs must also be guarded against. On the positive side, it is not enough to be just; that is, to return good for good and to exact only proportionate retribution for a wrong suffered. He who seeks the pleasure of Allah must be benevolent; that is, he must render good without any thought of return, and forgive wrongs and injuries till beneficence towards fellow beings becomes part of his nature and flows out of him as naturally as affection for close kindred.

Now we are going to come in our introduction the last thing, that is, the reasoning of the Koran there is a word, "Istighfar", that is very important to understand. After this we will consult the translation for the benefit of the entire universe from Reverend Zafrulla Khan, but first let me clarify and make you understand in my introduction regarding the Koran.

For every commandment and every prohibition, in support of every claim and every refutation the Koran furnishes reasons that satisfy the intellect, enlighten the mind, strengthen faith and generate the motive power for action in conformity to its teachings. The Koran is guidance for mankind comprising clear proofs of guidance and discriminating between truth and falsehood. That you will find in chapter 2, verse 1986.

It affirms, Allah is the Creator of all things; and follows up the affirmation immediately with the proof: He is the One, and the whole of creation is under His complete control. Are there any partners of Allah who have created the like of His creation so that the two creations appear alike? This you will find in chapter 13, verse 17.

The disbelievers called the Holy Prophet a madman. The Koran affirmed: By the grace of thy Lord, thou art not a madman; and set forth the proof: First, the pen and the inkstand and whatever is written therewith will affirm the wisdom of that which is being revealed to thee. How could such consummate wisdom be revealed to madman?

Second, a madman's actions are arbitrary ar futile. The efforts shall lead to the spiritual reb

of making and thou shalt have an unending reward here and hereafter. Witness, for instance, that in response, to the divine command (33 : 57) millions of people call down upon the Holy Prophet several times in the course of each day and offer him the salutation of peace.

Third, a madman's conduct is erratic and is not regulated by any set of values. In contrast, thou does illustrate in thy conduct high moral excellences.

Fourth, events will soon show which of you, thou or thy opponent, are afflicted with madness.

All this is very succinctly but very clearly set out in chapter 68, verses 2–7. "They allege Allah has taken unto Himself a son. Holy is He. On the contrary to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and in the earth; to Him are all obedient. Originator of the heavens and the earth, when He determines the coming into being of a thing. He says concerning it: Be and it is." This you will find in chapter 2, verses 117 and 118.

What need has Allah of a son? He is Holy and free from all weaknesses and defects, including the contingency of death. He needs not a son to take His place. Everyone and everything belongs to Him and is obedient to Him and under His

control. That which belongs to Him cannot be His equal. That which is obedient to Him and is under His control cannot rebel against His authority. No one can, therefore, aspire to equality with Him, nor would He need a helper to subdue such an aspirant. He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth; the sole Creator of the universe. He needed not a son to assist Him in the creation of the universe. Whatever He sees is carried into effect. He needs no son to assist Him in the governance of the universe.

They say: Allah has taken unto Himself a son. Holy is He. He is Self-Sufficient. To Him belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth. You have no authority in support of that which you allege. Do you then, say that concerning Allah of which you have no knowledge? That you will find in chapter 10, verse 69.

Being Self-Sufficient Allah needs no son as helper. Those who assert Allah has taken unto Himself a son can cite no reason or argument in support of their assertion. Some of them may be misled by expressions like son of God in earlier scriptures, but as those scriptures clearly affirm the unity of God they should realise this is evidence of their lack of knowledge. To insist

upon Allah having a son in any but a purely spiritual or metaphorical sense, is to insist upon an utter incongruity and impossibility. They have appointed partners of Allah, out of the jinn, whereas He has created them; and they falsely attribute to Him sons and daughters without any knowledge. Holy is He and exalted far above that which they attribute to Him.

Originator of the heavens and the earth! How can He have a son when He has no consort, and He has created everything and has full knowledge of all things. That is Allah, you, Lord; there is no god but He, the Creator of all things; so worship him alone. He is Guardian over everything. Eyes cannot reach Him, but He manifests Himself before the eyes. He is the Imperceptible, the All-Aware. This you will find in chapter 6, verses 101–104.

Proclaim: He is Allah, the Single; Allah, the Self-Existing and Besought of all. He begets not, nor is He begotten; nor is there anyone like unto Him or His equal.

Now further in my introduction I want to point out that in the Holy Koran God has warned us. The Holy Koran contains a continuous series of alternating glad tidings and warnings. The fundamental is that if man seeks for guidance and

adheres to the straight path, which you will find in chapter 1, verse 6, his life will be one continuous course of progress in every respect, here and hereafter. If he neglects seeking guidance, or, being invited to it, rejects it and turns his back on it, or having recognized it, persists in ignoring or defying it, he must take the consequences of his neglect or default of which he is continuously and repeatedly warned. Attention may be drawn; as illustration, to some of these warnings.

The earth is mankind's habitat and is invested with capacities which, properly exploited, would yield continous and increasing beneficence. Abuse or misuse of these capacities would spell ruin. One of the forms of abuse may be over-exploitation against which also there are warnings. For instance, when the earth is shaken violently and brings forth its burdens, and man cries out: What is the matter with it? On that day it will narrate its account for thy Lord has so directed it. On that day people will come forth in diverse groups that they may be shown the consequences of their actions. Then, whosoever will have done the smallest particle of good will see it, and whose will have done the smallest particle of ill-will also see it. That you will find in chapter 99, verses 2-9

It is pointed out that the beneficent exploitation of the earth's capacities and resources will be a source of delight, but that if the exploitation is not beneficent, the ultimate result will be ruin. We have made all that is on the earth an ornament for it, that we may try the dwellers thereof which of them is best in conduct. The time will come when we shall turn all that is on it into barren waste.

It needs to be stressed that non-beneficent exploitation does not comprise only harmful methods of say cultivation, mining, forestry, cattle breeding, horticulture and all the other multifarious ways of direct exploitation of the capacities and resources of the earth. It also includes the non-beneficent character of the uses to which the fruits of the earth may be put and all the consequences that might flow therefrom. For instance: "There is a lesson for you in the cattle. We provide you with a drink out of that which is in their bellies; that is, from betwixt the faces and the blood We provide milk pure and pleasant for those who drink it. Of the fruits or date-palms and the grapes you obtain intoxicating drinks, and also pure and wholesome food. Surely, in that is a sign for a people who make use of their

understanding. This you will find in chapter 16, verses 67-68.

Part of the warning is more specifically spelt out: "Oh, he who believes, liquor, gambling, idols and divining arrow are but abominations and satanic devises. So turn wholly away from each of them that you may prosper. Satan desires only to create enmity and hatred between you by means of liquor and gambling and to keep you back from the remembrance of Allah and from Prayer. Will you, then, desist?" This you will find in chapter 5, verses 91 and 92. There, of course, is also the peril that over exploitation may become non-beneficent and confront making with a crisis. Attention is drawn to this, "When the earth is stretched forth and pours out its contents and becomes empty". This you will find in chapter 84, verses 4 and 5.

So my children, I have completed my introduction.

The Divine Teachings of The Holy Koran

IN the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Ever Merciful.

All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the Heaven and Lord of the Earth, Lord of all the worlds. His is the greatness in the Heaven and the Earth and He is the Mighty, the Wise. My children, today, I am going to give from the Holy Koran the divine teachings as revealed to Prophet Mohammed by Almighty God. Those children who have often participated in my functions must have heard many a time that I am certain that we belong to only one God and there is no other God except one God and He has sent all the religions stage by stage when the need arose. In this way, the last prophet sent by Almighty God was Holy Mohammed, the chosen one of God, the messenger of God.

After going through the Holy Scripture, the Holy Koran, I have come to the conclusion that in this beautiful scripture, God explained everything clearly so that mankind cannot give the excuses of religion for hating each other, for degrading each other, for proclaiming one's own

religion as the most important one. As far as the Holy Koran is concerned it was clearly revealed to the Holy Prophet that the entire human race belongs to Him, the entire animal life and plant life belong to Him and all the prophets and all the religions also belong to Him. But many people had a doubt, because I was not giving any reference from the Holy Koran. So my Muslim children, when they gather around me, used to express doubts about it. So during my preparatory work on the Holy Koran which will be published very soon, I had to go through certain books for reference that whatever God taught me in the meditation regarding the Holy Koran to prove that He belonged to all and there was no special one among his His chosen ones. So to prove to the scientific world, I was seeking help from God to find from the English translation of the Holy Koran so that I can bring before the people that we all are belonging to only one God and no other God.

The translation of the Holy Koran has used words, believer and non-believer. These too have been mis-interpreted or misunderstood. So let me clarify the meaning of believer and non-believer. Believers are those who believe that

there is only one God and no other God. I have asked many of the revered scholars of individual religions, namely Christianity, Hinduism, and Islam. All of them have said that all the scriptures have already taught them that there is only one God and no other. They agree that their God also belongs to other religions and the children belonging to other religions have the same God, but different names have been given in different languages belonging to different nations. So, in Christianity we find the name God. In Arabic, we call Allah. In Hinduism we call Brahma, or one who believes in God is supposed to be called the believer, and one who does not believe at all in Brahma, Allah, God are supposed to be called the non-believers. By respecting the chosen one of individual religion does not mean that he is God. Because already it has been said many a times in the Holy Koran that whoever disrespected His messengers, who had been sent by Him to East and West, will never be His friend. So here also whenever we love, adore and praise the prophets of individual religions it does not mean that he is God. It does not mean that we are non-believers. Now if I give my version that the Koran has said like this or that, children

belonging to religions other than Islam will definitely agree to what I say, but my Muslim children will definitely not be satisfied until and unless I prove to them through the use of the Holy Koran. Now I am going to give you some of the verses from the Holy Koran giving the part that is called Supara. The chapter, called Suras, and the verses called Ayats are from the translation of the Holy Book by Rev. Zafrulla Khan.

Part 27 **Chapter 53** **Verses 57–63**

The Prophet is a warner, like the warners of old. The hour of judgment is approaching, none but Allah can avert it. Do you then wonder at this announcement, and laugh at it, and do not weep, and continue to be pre-occupied with vanities? Arise, and prostrate yourselves before Allah, and worship Him.

Part 24 **Chapter 40** **Verses 70–79**

So be patient. Surely the promise of Allah is true. Whether We show thee part of that which We have promised them, or We cause thee to die, to Us will they be brought back and they shall then learn the truth; We did send Messengers before thee, of them are those that we have mentioned

to thee, *and of them are those that We have not mentioned to thee*. It behoves not a Messenger to bring a Sign except by the leave of Allah. When Allah's decree goes forth, the matter is settled with justice, and those who pursue falsehood are the losers.

Note: Almighty God has sent over one lakh messengers before the Holy Prophet was born.

Part 25 **Chapter 43** **Verses 37–46**

If We cause thee to die, We shall still exact retribution from them; or We shall show thee in this life that which We have promised them; for surely We have complete power over them. So hold fast to that which has been revealed to thee; surely thou art on the right path. Thy revelation is a source of honour for thee and for thy people; and you will surely be called to account. *Seek among the teachings of those of Our Messengers whom We sent before thee*. Did we appoint any deities besides the Gracious One to be worshipped?

Part 24 **Chapter 43** **Verses 42–46**

Those who reject the Reminder when it has come to them are in evil case, for it is a Mighty

Book: falsehood cannot approach it from or aft, it is a revelation from the Wise, and Praiseworthy. Nothing is said to thee but that which was said to the Messengers before thee. Thy Lord is Most Forgiving, also Master of painful chastisement. Had We revealed the Koran in a foreign tongue, they would have said: Why have not its verses been expounded clearly? What! An Arab Prophet, and a scripture in a foreign tongue? Tell them; is a guidance and a healing for those who believe, and those who do not believe are deaf of ears and it is hidden from them. They are like a person who is called from a far-off place.

We also gave Moses a Book, and concerning it also there were differences. Had it not been for a word that had gone forth before from thy Lord, the matter would have been decided between them. They are certainly in a disquieting doubt concerning the Koran.

Part 20 **Chapter 28** **Verses 52–62**

Thy Lord would never destroy a people until He had raised among them a Messenger, reciting unto them Our Signs; nor would We destroy a town unless the people thereof were wrong-doers.

Whatever you are given in this life is but a temporary provision thereof; and that which is with Allah is better and more lasting. Will you not then understand? Can he to whom We have promised good in the life to come, and he is sure to see Our promise fulfilled, be like the one whom we have provided with the good things of this life, and then on the Day of Judgment he will be brought up for his accounting?

Part 28 **Chapter 65** **Verses 2–8**

Let one who is in easy circumstances spend according to his means, and let him whose means of subsistence are straightened spend out of that which Allah has given him. Allah does not require of anyone beyond that which He has bestowed on him. For those suffering from hardship, Allah will soon bring about ease.

Part 27 **Chapter 53** **Verses 34–56**

Seest thou him who turns away from the truth, and gives only a little in the cause of Allah, and is niggardly? Has he the knowledge of the unseen, so that he can see his own end? Has he not been told of that which is in the Scriptures of Moses and of Abraham the Faithful, that no bearer of

burden shall bear the burden of another; that man will have nothing but that which he strives for; that the result of his striving shall soon be known and he will then be fully recompensed; and that the final decision rests with thy Lord; and he makes people laugh and He makes them weep; that He causes death and He gives life; that He creates the pairs, male and female, from a sperm drop when it is emitted; that it is for Him to initiate the second creation; that it is He who bestows wealth and makes content; that He is the Lord of Sirius; that He destroyed the first tribe of 'Ad and the tribe of Thamud, and spared no one, and the people of Noah before them; verily, they were most unjust and most rebellious; and He overthrew the subverted cities, and they were covered up by Allah's chastisement? Which, then, of the bounties of thy Lord wilt thou dispute?

Note: Moses, Noah, Ad, Thamud were all God's prophets before Holy Prophet Mohammed came to Arabia for her people.

Holy Ramayana : Bala Kanda

YOU may be thinking why Babaji calls the Ramayana the Holy Ramayana. In many books of outstanding authors and scholars, only the word, Ramayana, has been used.

According to my knowledge, what I have learnt by actually experiencing it, I have come to the conclusion that those books or scriptures which guide us and save us from calamities and miseries and try to bring us to the right path, are to be called the holy books in reverence. So in reverence, I called Ramayana, the Holy Ramayana.

It is the story of Lord Rama. One important thing which I want to point out to you all is that when Lord Rama was born, he was not declared as an avatar like other avatars who were descendants of Lord Vishnu. Rama had to perform certain penances, and deserve certain principles. After that, he was declared an avatar of Vishnu.

Secondly, we are hating Kaikeyi because she insisted upon kind Dasaratha to send Rama to exile for 14 years in order to put her son, Bharata, on the throne. Here in the story you will find that Kaikeyi had more love for Rama than for Bharata,

and still she insisted on sending Rama to exile. One reason was her maid, the hunchback Manthara, who was irritated because Rama was going to be declared the heir apparent. This she did not like, so by any crooked means she tried to misguide Kaikeyi. In the beginning, her machinations did not influence Kaikeyi; for she had great love for Rama. So much so she herself confessed that Rama loved her more than he did his own mother. But this wicked hunchback maid continued to argue. In her arguement, an important point was that if Rama was installed on the throne Bharata might be executed. Even Kaikeyi might be tortured. Her daughter-in-law would be in agony. This upset Kaikeyi. She became angry. When Manthara found that Kaikeyi had lost the balance of mind because of anger, she reminded her of that promises which Raja Dasaratha gave to Kaikeyi when he was gravely ill and at that time she served him day and night. He promised to her that she could ask two things which he would fulfill without fail. Kaikeyi had told the king at that time that she would ask him when the need arose. So this wicked woman, her maid, reminded her of those two promises and those two promises were to send Rama to exile

and to put Bharata on the throne. So as Kaikeyi was not having balanced mind as God did not want her to have her mind in balance, because He wanted that Rama should be declared as avatar, so He made her jealous and she insisted on Raja Dasaratha, who was the Lord of Dharma, to fulfil his promises. Rama also accepted them. And so did Laxmana, his dearest brother, who joined him in his exile along with Sita.

So according to the scripture, sometimes a man commits a sin by hearing to someone who tries to distract his mind or destroy his balance of mind, and, in ignorance, he commits a sin. Such a person can be pardoned. So, that is why I never say anything against Kaikeyi, or give an example of Kaikeyi if any woman behaves in the way she behaved, because we know the circumstances which led Kaikeyi to behave in such a manner.

Secondly, in this discourse of mine, I am not going to give details of each and every battle fought by Rama to prove how strong, how brave and how valiant he was. Because in the present times if I describe these battles as they are described in the Ramayana, I do not think majority of the Hindu children, who are intellectuals, will believe them as facts. Indeed, they may

believe them as fictions or products of imagination. This will not bring about any fruitful results as many good things which are written in the Ramayana, from which we can acquire much knowledge in order to be on the right path, may also be rejected by such children.

So, my discourse on the Ramayana will be quite different from other books. Whatever I am going to say about the Ramayana, it will not be from me individually, but it will be from direct inspiration from the Supreme Spirit.

So I do not want to bring so many battles in my narratives, but there are certain battles which have to be described to establish a link with the story of the Ramayana: how Rama had to go through all these difficulties and how he was acknowledged as an avatar by the Almighty.

Now my children I am going to give you some ideas as to how the Ramayana has been divided. It has been divided into seven books. Book I is called Bala Kanda. That means the childhood. Book II is called Ayodhya Kanda, that is about the city of Ayodhya. Book III is called Aranya Kanda that is the life in the forest. Book IV is called Kiskindha Kanda, that is the happening in Kiskinda, and Book V is called Sundara Kanda, that is, the

auspicious book. Book VI is called Yuddha Kanda, that is the war with Ravana, and the last or the seventh book is called Utra Kanda, the aftermath. So I shall start book-wise, from Book I. As I have told you, it is called Bala Kanda from it we will know the childhood of Rama.

Around the banks of the river Sarayu was the kingdom of Kausala. Its capital was Ayodhya, a world-renowned city, founded by the illustrious Manu, one of the primeval lords of mankind. After a certain number of generation, the ruler of Ayodhya was King Dasaratha who was well versed in the Vedas and devoted to Dharma. He was a farsighted monarch, loved by his subjects. The ministers of this Mahatma ruler were exceptionally qualified. Unswervingly loyal, they were shrewd psychologists and placed each problem in its proper perspective. There were eight of them.

Why we call Raja Dasaratha as a mahatma ruler? Mainly because of his character. King Dasaratha was free from the 10 vices born of lust: hunting, gambling, sleeping during the day, slandering, womanising, drunkenness, singing, dancing, playing musical instruments, and idling. And the eight born out of anger: back-bitting,

rashness, malice, jealousy, probing into others faults, unjustly appropriating others wealth, swearing and using bitter words.

Because he was free from these vices, he was called the mahatma ruler. But as he had no son, he was most unhappy and it had become a cause of great sorrow to him. It came to his mind one day that why should he not perform the horse sacrifice to obtain a son. He ordered his chief minister, Sumantra, to call the gurus, the family priests and other Brahmins. He spoke to them thus: "Fed with Dharma and purpose all these years, I have longed for a son but I have longed in vain. I cannot even pretend happiness any more. So I have decided to perform the horse sacrifice exactly as ordained in the Sastras."

So having successfully completed the difficult horse sacrifice, Raja Dasaratha said to Sage Rishya Sringa: "Oh Sage, the welfare of my race is in your hand." The Sage replied: "Oh King Dasaratha, you will have four sons to continue the glory of your dynasty," and left.

Six seasons passed. It was in the twelfth month on the nineth lunar day of the bright fortnight of Chaitra, the eldest wife of Dasaratha, Kausalya gave birth to Rama, the universally honoured

Lord of the worlds. The youngest wife of Dasaratha Kaikeyi gave birth to Bharata who possessed the quarter of the glory and virtued of Vishnu. Sumitra, the second wife of Dasaratha, gave birth to twins, Satrughana and Laxmana, expert in use of weapons and each possessing one quarter of the glory of Vishnu.

The four sons of Dasaratha were handsome, filled with all virtues and shine like the stars in the four quarters. They were gentle and humble, devoted to the study of the Vedas and skilled in archery. The children grew up in the palace. Raja Dasaratha, mahatma of Dharma, then began discussing the questions of their marriages with his family priests and ministers. It was during the course of one such discussion that the great Sage Visvamitra arrived unannounced, and asked the palace doorkeeper to send word to the King that Visvamitra had come to see him. When King Dasaratha came to know of it, he rushed to see him and said: "Visvamitra, you, who once was a Kshatriya became a Brahmin by the result of your terrible penance, do me great honour today. What is your desire, noble one? You are like a god to me. What service can I lay at your feet?" Visvamitra replied: "Sire, I have resolved to

perform a sacrifice to achieve my service, spiritual aim. Lend me Rama, the eldest of your sons, Sire. Let me have him, the brave one. I will protect him and he will kill the Raakshasa." King Dasaratha trembled and felt faint, but he steadied himself. The words of Visvamitra pained him. He thought, "How my son, Rama, who is not even 16 years of age, fight the Raakshasas?" He was tempted not to send his son. The patient sage Vasistha, suggested to the king: "You are the very personification of Dharma. You cannot abandon Dharma. You are honoured in the three worlds as the soul of Dharma. You have given your word, so you must keep it. Let the Holy Visvamitra have Rama. If Visvamitra so wished, he could have defeated and destroyed the Raakshasas himself, but he seeks to enhance the glory of your son. This is why he has appealed to you."

So my children, here again as God has the desire of declaring Rama as an avatar, He forced Visvamitra to make Rama fight the Raakshasas.

Now the advice of Vasistha restored the balance and vision to King Dasaratha's mind. Calling Rama and Laxmana to the court, he entrusted them both to the care of Visvamitra.

Visvamitra walked ahead, behind him came Rama, bow in hand with crow's wing locks of hair covering his ears. Behind Rama came Laxmana. About 12 miles from the capital along the southern banks of Sarayu, Visvamitra turned to Rama and said, "Gently sip this water, my child, and recite the mantra, "Bala and Atibala". After you have uttered them, you will never feel fatigue, disease or age. No one will be your equal in the three worlds in wisdom, skill and good fortune." Both Rama and Laxmana sipped the water given to them by Visvamitra, and recited the mantra. Then, following Visvamitra, the two brothers travelled in a north-eastern direction till they arrived near King Janaka's sacrificial altar. Rama said: "What a magnificient yagna. Thousands of Brahmins from different parts of the country, all well versed in the Vedas, are here. So are hundred of carts çarrying their belongings and the necessities for the sacrificial yagna. Let us rest here for a while, Holy One." King Janaka received them with great respect and courtesy. And with his palms joined in anjali, he said to Visvamitra: "Holy Sire, please be seated along with the other great sages present here."

Questioned by Janaka, Visvamitra introduced

the two young men, the sons of Dasaratha. He gave an account of their hard journey, their stay in the ashrama, the destruction of the Raakshasas, their meeting with Ahalya, conversation with Gouthama and their visit to Mithila for examining the great bow. Having said all this to Janaka, Mahamuni Visvamitra became silent. Next day, in the clear light of the dawn, King Janaka sent for Visvamitra and the two princes. He greeted them in the manner recommended in the scriptures, and said that there was the great bow, about which there was a story. "Once upon a time there was a king named Devavirtha. The gods had left this bow in his charge. It so happened Shiva's father-in-law, Daksha, was performing a great yagna. It was at that time Shiva picked up this bow in order to frustrate the sacrifice and to warn the assembled gods. 'You have forgotten to set aside my share of sacrificial offering. You have been warned by the celestial ones. I will cut to pieces your dazzling limbs with this bow.'

The gods pleaded with Shiva. And finally he was conciliated. He handed over the bow to the gods and they, in turn, left it in trust with my illustrious ancestor, Devavirtha." He then added: "Once I was ploughing the sacrificial field.

Imagine my surprise when my plough share uncovered a baby! I adopted her after naming her Sita, meaning 'the furrow'. My daughter is not a 'womb born' child. When the time for her marriage approached, I made it clear that I was looking for a royal suiter of exceptional valour. I refused to give her away to any ordinary prince. Many kings had come. All had been shown the bow of Shiva. All had tried. But none had yet succeeded in so much as lifting it, leave alone bending and stringing it." Janaka ordered the bow to be brought. It required 500 powerful carpullers to draw the eight-wheel vehicle on which the chest containing the bow was lying. With palm joined in anjali, Janaka said to Visvamitra and the two princes: "Here is the bow, which is venerated by the kings of our dynasty, though none has succeeded in bending it. The gods, the asuras, the raakshasas, the gandarvas, the yakshas and the nagas all have failed. How can a mere mortal succeed in bending and stringing it? But here it is, excellent ascetic. Let the two princes examine it."

Visvamitra turning to the Raghava prince, Rama, said: "Child, what do you think?" Rama opened the chest and looked at the bow and

replied: "It is a divine bow, excellently made. I will run my fingers on it. Yes I will lift it and bend it." "Splendid," said the Raja and the Muni. With Visvamitra's approval. Rama, as if playing a game, jerked the bow up and put the string on in front of thousands of spectators. He continued to bend it to the breaking point. With a clash of thunder, it snapped. Stunned by the reverberating sound, all the people, except Visvamitra, King Janaka and the two princes, fell to the ground.

At the auspicious hour, called the vijaya, propitious for a wedding, Rama and his brother dressed for the nuptials. The Sage Vasistha said to Janaka: "Sire, Raja Dasaratha with sons is waiting for the one who will give away his daughters; for, such is the custom. Gifts are possible only with the mutual consent of the giver and the receiver. This is your Dharma. Let the auspicious nuptials begin." Radiantly happy, Janaka, in response to Mahatma Vasistha, said to Dasaratha: "Who stands as guardian of my door? Whose permission does the royal guest require? This kingdom is yours. Why should you hesitate to step inside your own house? My daughters wait near the sacred fire like flickering flames. Let the ceremony

commence. Let there be no more delay."

Dasaratha escorted his sons into the wedding pavilion. Raja Janaka turned to Vasistha and said: "I request you, the venerable one, to solemnize the marriage ceremony of Rama, who is loka Rama, the delight of the world." After making the offering to agni, he escorted Sita, dazzling with jewels, to the sacred fire and seated her opposite Rama, said to him: "This is my daughter, Sita, now your life partner in Dharma. Take her hand in yours and accept her. May both of you prosper. She is a girl of good fortune. She will be devoted to you and be as faithful to you as a shadow." Raja Janaka poured the water that was in his palm into Rama's palm.

After bestowing his daughter, Sita, Raja Janaka said to Laxmana: "Come Laxmana, may you prosper, too. I give you Urmila. Accept her. The time is auspicious. Let there be no delay."

Then Janaka said to Bharata: "Descendant of Ragu, take Mandovi as your wife."

Next, he told Satrughna, "Take Shurtakirti as your wife."

To all of them he said: "Heros all of you, you who are gentle and disciplined, these girls will now be your wives. The time is auspicious. Let

the marriage ceremony be solemnized." The four brothers clasping the hands of the four princesses, circled the sacred fire in accordance with their rites of the traditional scripture.

In this book, sage Visvamitra has been given an important position. So I will give a short summary of Visvamitra's life history. Visvamitra was the son of great Kausika. He was Kshatriya by birth. He observed strict penance and austerities for one thousand years. The gods were impressed and came to reward him with the fruit of his tapasya. The extraordinarily radiant Brahma praised him: "May you prosper. May you become a rishi as a result of your discipline." Saying this, Brahma returned to heaven.

Visvamitra continued his tapasyá with even greater devotion. A long time passed, one day a most ravishing apsara of all, Menaka, came to take bath in the puskar lake. Visvamitra saw Menaka. She was bewitchingly beautiful like the lightning flashing in dark blue clouds, and was pierced by the arrows of the God of Love. "Welcome to my ashram, Oh apsara!", Visvamitra said to Menaka. "Please love me, for I love you."

Menaka stayed in the Ashram with Visvamitra. Her presence there frustrated much of his strict

tapasya. Five years passed in this manner, then another five years, with Menaka happily living in Visvamitra's ashram. But Mahamuni Visvamitra felt ashamed about the relationship. It worried him. It occured to him that he had fallen victim to a plot by the gods to cancel the surpassing excellence of his penance. He thought that ten years had passed like a day and a night, and he had become a slave to his lust. His discipline was destroyed. Stricken in heart, he brooded, distressed and paralysed, not knowing what to do. He then noticed Menaka trembling with fear in front of him, her palms were joined in anjali. Gently but firmly, he asked her to leave, determined to be celibate all his life in order to purify his character by mastering passion. Visvamitra journeyed towards the banks of the river Kaushik. There he practised the most mortifying tapasya for a thousand years. The gods were aghast, seeing the holy ascetic lost in absolute meditation on a mountain in the north. They approached Brahma, grand sire of the world, and prayed to him to grant the title of maharishi to Visvamitra; "You have not yet mastered your passion. Try harder, excellent ascetic." Visvamitra, excelling in ascetic powers, stood alone, hands upraised,

subsisting on air only for thousand years. In the summer season, he was surrounded by the four fires of the four quarters of the earth, and the fifth fire of the sun overhead. In winter, he remained standing in water, night and day, while the rain fell on his head.

The austerity so agitated the gods that Indra went to the apsara. Rambha, and said: "Rambha, help the gods. Stir lust in Visvamitra and nullify his tapasya. This magnificent mission I entrust to you".

Rambha fearful, palms joined in anjali, replied: "His temper is fatal. He will curse me. I am afraid, my lord. Have pity on me." Indra saw her apprehensive and trembling. The thousand-eyed god assured her, "Do not fear, Rambha. You will succeed. Do as I say. I will become a sweetly singing kokila and be near you, when trees, and flowers are in spring-time, and the god of love reigns in the world. You are supremely seductive. It is not possible for Visvamitra to resist you."

Agreeing, Rambha, most exquisite of apsaras, smiling sweetly approached Visvamitra. He heard the song of the kokila and gazed at the apsara fascinated. A faint suspicion rose in his mind at the surpassing sweetness of the song and the

unparelled loveliness of the woman. It must be the mischief-making mind of Indra, he thought, and cursed Rambha, saying: "Rambha, you knew I was fighting lust and anger. You dare to seduce me. Become a stone for ten thousand years, foolish woman, until such time when a Brahmin, Vasistha redeems you from your punishment."

Immediately, Visvamitra regretted his words, realising that how anger had wiped out the fruits of his penance. Rambha, however, was transformed into a rock and Indra fled.

Visvamitra then resolved, "No more, never more, never more will I lose my temper. Never more will I speak angry words. I shall control myself for hundred years. I will become a Brahmin. I will not break. I will not eat. I will stand firm. I will be firm. I will not allow my limbs to decay."

Rama Navami

MAN has not been always faithful to God and his laws. In the long history of humanity, we come across instances when man's departure from the righteous path has been so glaring that He has to send His prophets and avatars to bring man back to the correct way of life. When man failed to heed to the words of prophets, God showed his wrath by sending calamities and pestilences. The mighty were subdued by the simple and the ordinary.

In days of yore, there was a powerful king called Ravana, by long years of prayers and penitence he had endeared himself to God and received powers that made him feared and admired by all the mortals and the devas. Simplicity and humility are the hallmarks of the great. Because one is great and mighty he is simple also. But Ravana grew in arrogance. As he had acquired invincible powers, his ego prompted him to commit sins and risk for himself God's punishment.

Ravana was a great scholar. He could easily distinguish between what was right and wrong. But knowing is something and living upto it is

rather different. Anyone could render advice on good conduct, but what counts is whether he upholds the norms in his life. Many are seen sermonising from platforms about the sanctity of moral laws but in privacy they violate the same or do not adhere to the rules.

Those who go wide should set an example by their own behaviour and this is what Sri Rama strove to achieve by living up to the ideals to which he was wedded to. Lord Vishnu's incarnation as Sri Rama was only to demonstrate how a human being can remain righteousness. His mother declared that Dharma for which he sacrificed a kingdom and left his parents, would constantly protect him.

On the day of Rama Navami people should seek His grace and vow to tread the path which he had chalked out. Sri Rama prescribed the guidelines for righteousness, standards for righteous behaviour and a pattern for an ideal life, to enable mortals to adopt the same in their day-to-day life. The chanting of the glorious name 'Rama' is bound to remove sins and ills and drive away the impurities in the mind. Everyone should utter the name 'Rama' or any of the attributes of Hari, meditate on Him in the morning and

commence the routine work. Likewise while going to bed, 'Rama' should be repeated as Lord Shiva grants peace. Devotees should not seek favours or boons from God. Their prayers to give them peace automatically include the appeal for guidance to solve their problems.

Implicit obedience to moral law (Dharma) with a determination not to defy or cicumvent the code thereunder even under compelling circumstances is the prime task for everyone as enjoined in the Shastras. His incarnation as Lord Rama, the Almighty took upon Himself the duty to propagate the significance of Dharma by living according to the established norms refusing to deviate from it even in the face of great odds.

The convincing arguments of his preceptor Sage Vasistha, the Guru, the threat of Bharatha to fast unto death, the grief writ in the faces of citizens and the sentiments expressed the sage Jabalih all these did not prevent Sri Rama from his decision to spend 14 years in the forest as per the last wish of his father. It was his Dharma to bow to his father's wish. His father's wish was to him a command.

People generally misunderstand Kaikeyi as the person responsible for Rama's exile. This is a

wrong notion. Sri Rama was born to rule. Bharatha not only loved Sri Rama as his brother but considered him as his Lord. Kaikeyi's love for Sri Rama was not in any way less, but more than what she had for her own son. It is only out of supreme love for Sri Rama, that she took the unpleasant decision to banish him to the forest, which would certainly enhance his stature as an avatar. While parting Sri Rama asked Bharatha to treat his mother Kaikeyi with kindness, as according to him, she was not responsible for the events which led to his exile.

Sri Rama considered all men equal. People's love for Sri Rama was not qualified by their caste or position in life. He was susceptible to pure love irrespective of its origin. While Sri Rama was in the forest a woman of low birth, Sabri, was expecting Him everyday. Her pure love for Sri Rama was divine. Poor as she was, she had nothing to offer Sri Rama when he happened to pay her visit. But she had a fruit-bearing tree in her garden. She became glad at the thought that she could offer him fruits. She wanted to select the best fruits for offering. As she was no connoisseur, she adopted a clownish method to pick the ripe ones. She took each fruit, bit it, and tasted

whether it was sweet or sour.

By this primitive method she gathered a number of fruits and gave them to Sri Rama on his arrival with Sri Lakshmana. Sri Rama ate the fruits with relish. But Sri Lakshmana was indignant at the thought that Sabri had given tasted fruits. But Sri Rama admonished Sri Lakshmana and advised him that he should value her pure love more than any other consideration. This incident shows the magnanimity of Sri Rama. You all know the later events and how Sri Sita was carried away by Ravana. This led to the fall of Ravana subsequently.

While everyone will be carried away by flattery, those with power and pelf are easier prey to sweet and pleasing words. Sychophants will toe the line of their mentors, even if it is immoral lest any disagreement results in estrangement. Truth will never be palatable. Genuine friends and relatives will not fail to tender advice, unmindful of the consequences, but the general tendency is to flock to a man when he is prosperous and desert him in adversity.

As the confrontation with Sri Rama's army became inevitable, Ravana convened his assembly, when all but one hailed his bravery. Vibhishna, his brother, alone warned him of the

consequences and urged him to release Sri Sita, and avert the extinction of the entire community. His words of wisdom fell on deaf ears. Ravana not only called him a traitor but cited the example of a wild elephant which is not afraid of the chain or a spear but is trapped with the help of its own species. It is said that before God destroys someone, he drives him mad. So also Ravana became mad of his own powers which ultimately led to his fall.

Sri Rama did not depend on his powers only to fight with Ravana. He prayed to Sri Durga and fortified himself with her blessings and protection. In the war that followed Ravana lost everything. Mortally wounded he was lying in agony. The wages of sin is death. Though vanquished Ravana was a man of great learnig. So Sri Rama asked Sri Lakshmana to consider Ravana as his Guru and advised him to learn from him.

Sri Lakshmana stood on the head side of Ravana and sought his learning. But Sri Rama advised him to stand near the feet of Ravana as a mark of respect for the Guru. The pupil is expected to show reverence to his Guru irrespective of the latter's questionable character.

After the victory was achieved Sri Rama

remembered the great help rendered to him in the battle by Durga Mata as a mark of thanks giving instituted the festival of Navratri. Light is the symbol of righteousness and darkness, the representation of evil. Just as light dispels darkness, righteousness will always triumph over evil.

God does not hate the sinner, but the sin. He will give refuge to the supplicant regardless of his demerits. Sri Rama took Vibhishna into his fold convincing others about the latter's earnestness, unmindful of his long association with Ravana. So one can always be sure of the mercy of the Lord.

The Holy Bible : Introduction II
Birth of Jesus Christ

(All verses have been taken from the Gospels of Mathew, Mark, Luke and John.)

According to St. Mathew

Chapter I

1 THE book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

17 So all the generation from Abraham to David are fourteen generations from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother, Mary, was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

19 Then Joseph, her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily,

20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a

fear not to take into thee Mary thy wife for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

Explanation

So here we know that Mary was Joseph's wife and not God's. So Lord Jesus cannot be son of God in technical sense but we accept that he was chosen one of God which will be clarified in the latter verse.

21 And she shall bring forth a son and thou shalt call his name Jesus for *he shall save his people from their sins.*

Explanation

This verse brings complete understanding that Lord Jesus was son of Mary, and God sent him to save his people from their sins, but not to save the world. Because God has declared that he has sent his chosen one to every nation from among them and in their own language. This also is defined in the Holy Koran. So Lord Jesus was one of the dearest chosen ones sent to that part of Arabia where he was born for the peope of Arabia.

24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as

the angel of the Lord had bidden him, *and took unto him his wife.*

Explanation

Again St. Mathew clarifies that Joseph on getting the message of God in a dream accepts Mary as his wife.

25 And knew her not till she had broughtforth her first born son and he called his name Jesus.

Chapter 2

1 Now, when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King, behold, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem.

2 Saying, where is he that is born *King of Jews?* For, we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

Explanation

King of Jews and not the world (the Jews were Arabs).

3 When Herod the king had heard these

things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

10 When the wise men saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

11 And when they entered into the house, they saw the young child with Mary, his mother, and fell down and worshipped him.

12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

13 And when they had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, arise, and take the *young child* and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring the Word, for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

Note: Again it has proved that Jesus was the chosen one, and not the only son of God. God said take the young child and his mother and did not say take my son and wife.

14 When he arose, he took the young child and

his mother by night, and departed into Egypt.

15 And was there until the death of Herod.

19 But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt.

20 Saying, arise and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: For they are dead which sought the young child's life:

21 And he arose, and took the young child and his mother and came into the land of Israel.

22 But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in place of his father, Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee.

23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth.

Chapter 3

1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea.

2 And saying, "Repent you, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand".

4 And the same John had his raiment of Camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins, and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

5 Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region found about Jordan.

6 And were baptized by him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee unto John of Jordan to be baptized by him.

14 But John forbade him, saying, "I need to be baptized by thee, and comest thou to me?"

15 And Jesus answering said unto him, "Suffer it to be so now. For thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness". Then he suffered him.

Note: From this verse, we learnt that to fulfil all righteousness or to do righteous work we should be prepared to suffer for it, without crying or complaining.

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water also, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him.

17 And lo, a voice from heaven saying, "This is *my beloved son*, in whom I am well pleased".

Note : By saying "beloved son" God has indicated that he had sent many sons before Jesus and will send more after him. But among the chosen ones Jesus was a special one. (This confirms the Koran). So, he was not the only son of God. — But the Gospel of St. Mark, has clarified the confusion regarding Jesus and John, as to who John and Jesus were.

According to St. Mark

Chapter 1

1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, *the son of God.*

Note : St. Mark has not said that Jesus was the only son of God. So it has proved that there were more. But he was a special or beloved one. And the second verse clarifies further that Jesus was also a messenger of God and not the son of God.

2 As it is written in the Prophets, "Behold, *I send my messenger* before thee, who shall prepare the way before thee".

3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness,

prepare you the way of the *Lord*; make his path straight.

4 John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentence for the remission of sins.

7 And also preached, saying, there cometh one *mightier than I* after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.

8 I indeed have baptized you with water. But he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

Note: So again here, John the Baptist preached that another messenger mightier than him is coming because, according to St. Mark, John the Baptist was also a messenger of God.

According to St. Luke

Chapter 1

5 There was in the days of Herod, a certain priest named Zachariah and his wife was of the daughter of Aaron, and her name was Elizebeth.

6 And they were both righteous before God,

walking in all the commandments and ordinance of the Lord, blameless.

7 And they had not child, because that Elizebeth was barren and they both were now well stricken in years.

8 And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course.

9 According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incence when he went into the temple of the Lord.

11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the alter of incence.

12 And when Zachariah saw him he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

13 But the angel said unto him, fear not, Zachariah, for thy prayer is heard and thy wife, Elizebeth, shall bear thee a son, and thou shall call his name John.

14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth.

15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink, and *he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost,*

even from his mother's womb.

26 And in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth.

27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David and the virgin's name was Mary.

28 And the angel came in unto her and said, "Hail thou that are highly favoured, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women" (confirmed in the Koran also).

29 And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

30 And the angel said unto her, "Fear not, Mary, for thou has found favour with God.

31 And behold, thou shalt conceive in the womb, and bring forth a son and shalt call his name Jesus.

32 He shall be great, and shall be called the son of the Highest and the *Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:*

33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end".

34 Then said Mary unto the angel, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?"

35 And the angel answered and said unto her, "*the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee*, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that the holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called *the son of God*.

36 And, behold, thy cousin, Elizebeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

37 *"For with God nothing shall be impossible."*

Note : Many people are confused because they have never tried to read the Holy Bible properly. Here in this Gospel of St. Luke, all confusions disappear. Now we understand that when God wants to send any chosen one, whom some called messengers and avatar, he puts in the mother's womb, the Holy Ghost. So in this chapter, God put in the womb of Elizebeth as well as that of Mary the Holy Ghost so their sons would be the sons of God or the messengers or chosen ones. I feel that Jesus was a chosen one because in verse 32, St. Luke mentions that the

Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father, David. So how can then Jesus be the son of God? In this way, all are his sons, whom he has created, but John and Jesus are special ones because God has filled the Holy Ghost in the wombs of Elizebeth and Mary. So, John and Jesus are messengers, prophets and chosen ones of God.

According to St. John

Chapter 1

1 In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.
2 The same was in the beginning with God.
3 All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.
4 In Him was life, and the life was *the light of men*.
5 And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.
6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.
7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness

of the light, that all men through him might believe.

8 He was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light.

9 That was the true light, which lighteth every-man that cometh into the world.

10 He was in the world and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12 But as many as received him, to them *he gave the power to become the children of God even to them that believe in his name.*

13 *Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

Note : In this verse, it is clear that any one can get the light inversely. Life was the light of man. Here men is plural, so there must be more light than one. The verse 12 has clarified that any one can become the son of God if he respects and believes in God's chosen one. The verse 13 is also mentioned in the Holy Koran.

It means that nobody comes to earth without God's will. It also explains that "born not of

blood nor flesh nor will of man but of God." If so, then we all have been sent by the same and only one God, through his will we have come to the earth, so we must not consider each other higher or lower.

God

The Scriptures : Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam

ONCE again, I want to prove that all the divine religions have been created by only one God, the master of the universe, who sent His messages through His various religious scriptures in different styles, but, teachings and the basic points remained the same. This proves that all religions belong to Him. Like the Jews, the Christians, the Muslims and the Hindus too have a legend of the flood. Before giving that story, I have to give you an explanation regarding Manu. Manu means world teacher sent by Brahma. Please note Brahma has not sent only one Manu, but several.

The following are the three versions of the story, which forms a part of all religions.

Hinduism

3000 Years Old

There lived in ancient times a holy man called Manu, who, by penances and prayers, had won the favour of the Lord of Heaven. One day

they brought him water for ablution; then, as they washed his hands, a little fish appeared, and spoke in human tongue thus: "Take care of me, and I will be thy Saviour!" "From what evil thou preserve me?" Manu asked. "The fish replied: "A flood will sweep all creatures, I will rescue thee from that." "But how shall I preserve thee?" Manu said. The fish rejoined: "So long as we are small, we are in constant danger of destruction, for fish eats fish. So keep me in a jar. When I outgrow the jar, then dig a trench, and place me there, when I outgrow the trench, then take me to the ocean—I shall then be out of reach of danger."

Having thus instructed Manu, rapidly the fish grew large. Then he spoke again: "In such and such a year the flood will come. Therefore, construct a ship, and pay me homage. When the flood rises, enter thou the ship, and I will rescue thee."

So Manu did as he was ordered, and preserved the fish, then carried it in safety to the ocean. And in the very year the fish enjoined, he constructed a ship, and paid the fish respect. And there he took refuge when the flood arose. Soon near him the fish swam. To his horn Manu tied fast the

cable of his vessel. Thus, drawn along the waters, Manu passed beyond the northern mountain. Then the fish addressing Manu, said: "I have preserved thee, quickly attach the ship to yonder tree. But lest the waters sink from under thee, as fast as they subside, so fast shall thou descend the mountain gently after them." Thus he descended from the northern mountain. The flood had swept away all living creatures. Manu alone was left.

In another version of the myth, it is said that Manu took with him the Seven Sages and a pair of every living creature, who repopulated the world after the deluge.

Christianity

The Bible – Old Testament : 2000 Years Old

Chapter 6

And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them.

There were giants in the earth in those days;

and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bore children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that the imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

And God said unto Noah, the end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shall pitch it within and without with pitch. And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die.

But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.

And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female.

And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them.

Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

Chapter 7

And the Lord said unto Noah, come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.

Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female.

Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth.

For yet even days, and I will cause it to rain

upon the earth forty days forty nights; and every living substance that I made will I destroy from off the face of the earth.

And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lifted up above the earth.

And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man:

And the waters prevailed upon the earth a hundred and fifty days.

Chapter 8

And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ar'a-rat.

And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried.

And God spoke unto Noah, saying, go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee.

Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the

earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth.

And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him.

Chapter 9

And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.

Islam

The Koran: 1400 Years Old

Chapter XI Section III **Verses 25–49**

Verse 25

We sent Noah to his people (with a Mission): "I have come to you with a Clear Warning."

Verse 26

That thou serve none but God: verily I do fear for you. The Penalty of a grievious day.

Verse 27

But the Chiefs of the unbelievers among his

people said: "We see (in) thee nothing but a man like ourselves: nor do we see that any follow thee but the meanest among us, in judgment immature: nor do we see in you (all) any merit above us: in fact you are liars!"

Verse 36

It was revealed to Noah: "None of thy people will believe except those who have believed already! So grieve no longer over their deeds."

Verse 37

But construct an Ark under Our Eyes and Our Inspiration, and address Me no further on behalf of those who are in sin: for they are about to be overwhelmed in the flood."

Verse 40

At length, behold! there came Our Command and the fountains of the earth gushed forth! We said: "Embark therein, of each kind two, male and female and your family.

Verse 41

So He said: "Embark you on the ark in the name of God whether it move or be at rest!"

Verse 42

So the ark floated with them on the waves towering like mountains.

Verse 44

Then the word went forth: "O earth! swallow up thy water, and O sky withhold thy rain!" And the water abated, and the matter was ended, the ark rested on Mount Judi and the word went forth— "Away with those who do wrong!"

Verse 48

The word came: "O Noah! come down from the ark with peace from Us, and Blessings on thee and on some of the people who will spring from those with thee: But there will be other people to whom we shall grant their pleasures for a time, but in the end will a grievious penalty reach them from Us.

Parsis and the Followers of Zarathustra

CONCENTRATED mainly in several towns of western India, where they number about one lakh and in Pakistan, were they total about five thousand, Parsis consider themselves to be descendants of small group of people who emigrated from Persia in the 8th century A.D. in order to avoid forceful conversion to Islam, and to retain Zoroastrianism. It is believed that they first landed on the island of Diu off the south coast of Kathiawar, and that from there they sailed to Gujarat and obtained the local ruler's permission to settle at a place near Sanjan on the Gujarat coast. The first group of refugees was later joined by others who fled from the increasing oppression and religious intolerance of the first cahliphs of the Abbasid family.

It is believed that in the 15th century the Parsi community in India was strengthened by further emigrants from Persia, and that these new arrivals brought about a revival of religious practices abandoned in the Indian environment. At that time there were also conversions of Hindus to the Zoroastrian faith, but in later times such

prosalytizing activities ceased and the Parsis did not admit any new converts to their community.

A great opportunity for the Parsi traders came with the establishment of European business enterprises. Some of them entered the services of foreign companies, and others developed trade in Western goods on their own account. Parsis had begun to settle in Bombay under the Portuguese (1530–1666) and several Parsi families attained high positions in the town which ever since has been their main stronghold.

The Parsis, more than any other community of Indian traders, were responsible for the development of the trade of Bombay, and particularly the trade connections with China, which Parsi merchants visited as early as 1756. Next to Bombay the port of Surat became an important Parsi centre, and early in the 18th century they also spread along the Malabar coast and some families established themselves in Madras. Less inhibited than Hindus by social and ritual restrictions, the Parsis found it easy to make contact with the Europeans.

When the ancestors of the Parsis first settled in India they spoke Persian, but being a small community they gradually adopted the language

of their host country and became speakers of Gujarati. There are also Zoroastrian texts written in modern Persian and in Gujarati.

Although the Parsis have adjusted themselves to some extent to Hindu ways of living, they retained until recent times certain items of dress which set them apart from other communities.

Only those who were entirely westernized abandoned their traditional style of clothing. They conformed to Hindu dietary habits in that they ate neither beef nor pork, but there was no prejudice against the drinking of alcoholic beverages. Like Hindus, they regarded eating as a religious act, during which the orthodox do not engage in conversation.

The early roots of Zoroastrianism lie in a cultural environment similar to that of Vedic Hinduism, but the character which it assumed in its formative period bears the imprint of its prophet and founder Zarathustra, a priest who lived in eastern Iran sometimes between 1000 B.C. to 600 B.C. The Parsis refer to him as Zarthusht. He was a reformer who attacked the old Indo-Iranian religion, particularly the practice of cruel animal sacrifices, and advocated a break with the worship of the old gods. Legend tells of his retreat into the mountain fastnesses of Iran,

where he strove for enlightenment in a state of ecstatic trance, and saw in a vision Ahura Mazdah, the supreme spirit of good, who is diametrically opposed to Ahriman, the spirit of evil.

The sacred scriptures of the Zoroastrians are known as the Avesta, part of which stem from different times. The Original texts were written in Avestan, an extinct language understood by only a few Parsi scholars, while the commentaries were written in Pahlavi. Belief in the existence of the one supreme deity, Ahura Mazdah, now usually referred to as Ohrmazd and credited with the creation of the spiritual and material worlds, is a basic element in Parsi doctrine as we know it. He is the source of all blessings and good things and Parsis address themselves to him in all their prayers.

Parsis have often been referred to as 'fire worshippers', but they resent this description and point out that though fire is an important element in their cult, it is a symbol of the deity and not an object of worship. As among the Vedic Hindus, fire occupied a central position in all rituals of the ancient Zoroastrians, and it was not always easy to distinguish between the concepts of the fire as such and the divinity

presiding over it.

Among the Parsis today fire is held to be sacred, and the so-called 'fire temples' are buildings for the preservation of the sacred fire. In Gujarat, they do not differ greatly from the dwelling houses of the wealthier families. Inside they have an outer and an inner hall. In the centre of the latter is a solid stone stool and on this stands an urn of copper, brass or silver, in which burns the sacred fire fed with sandalwood and other kinds of wood.

There are three types of sacred fires. The lowest grade is consecrated fire in a dwelling house or small family temple; this is the hearth fire which a Parsi never allows to die. If he changes his place of residence, he carries his fire with him to his new abode. Fires of greater sacredness burn in temples which should be built wherever numbers of Parsi families are living. They are made of first taken from a priest's house and the houses of three families of other classes, a process of consecration accompanied by the recitation of sacred texts.

The fire of the highest greade burns only in the most important temples, of which there are less than a dozen. At least 16 different fires are

needed to prepare this fire, and ceremonies and rites of consecration are complicated and expensive. A sword and maces hang on the wal of the temple, and there is a brass·bell which the priest rings at each watch when he performs a ceremony near the sacred fire.

The most famous sacred buildings of the Parsis are the so-called 'towers of silence'; large structures of stone or brick situated on hills and usually surrounded by gardens. In these the bodies of the dead are exposed to the sun and the flesh-eating vultures, for according to Parsi belief, corpses should not defile either earth or fire. These roofless towers consist of an outer wall, some 300 feet in circumference and a deep pit lined with masonry. Dead bodies are laid on a stone platform which is divided into three rows, the outermost for men, the next for women and the innermost for children. The construction of a tower of silence is accompanied by elaborate ceremonies, and after the first dead body has been deposited, the tower is closed to all, including Parsi priests, with the exception of the corpse bearers who enter it through a high iron door. When a body has been placed on the appropriate stone slab, the bearers leave and the

vultures soon descend upon the corpse and tear the flesh from the bones. Whatever remains is thrown into a central pit filled with sand charcoal.

Every religious rite has to be conducted by a priest, and there is a hereditary priesthood that is completely distinct from the laity. All Parsi priests in India are believed to be descended from a priest who is supposed to have been among the original settlers in Sanjan. Different branches of the original family have been allocated to districts in each of the Parsi settlements, in which members of one branch only may serve as priests. In each of these districts there is a high priest whose office is hereditary and passes from father to eldest son. He does not leave his headquarters to visit the priests under his charge, but hears and settles any complaints against his priests that are brought before him.

All the main phases in a Parsi's life are marked by rites and ceremonies. Between the ages of seven and nine boys and girls are initiated into the Zoroastrian faith. The ceremony consists of investing the child with a sacred shirt and a sacred cord, and this is followed by a ritual bath and offering of prayers by a priest. Both betrothal and mariage are the occasions of elaborate

ceremonies. At least two priests are required for the wedding rite, and they pronounce the marriage blessings in Old Persian and in Sanskrit. The questiones addressed to bride and bridegroom are in Persian and so are their answers. Parsis have not permitted polygamy since 1865, but a widow or divorced person may remarry.

Parsi funeral rites are relatively simple. The basic principle is to dispose of the dead body with the least possible risk of harm to the living. As a precaution all deaths are held to be caused by infection, and care is taken that people should come into as little contact as possible with the dead bodies as a result of this belief.

When death is approaching, a prayer of repentance should be said by the dying person or, if he is unable to do so, by a priest or a relative on his behalf. A short time after death the corpse is washed, and dressed in a clean set of clothes which are destroyed afterwards.

According to Zoroastrian belief punishment in hell does not last for eternity; there will be a final renewing of the world, when the evil will be overcome and the entire creation assume the quality of Ohrmazd, the source of all goodness and happiness. The dualism of good and evil is

considered capable of ultimate resolution, and the world view of the Parsis is basically optimistic.

Unlike Hinduism, which extols asceticism and favours a pessimistic attitude to life, the ideology of the Parsis is basically life-affirming, and its dualistic trends do not imply a confrontation of mind against matter. The flesh is not regarded as evil, celibacy is abhorred, and there is more equality between men and women than in either Hinduism or Islam. The life affirming element in Zoroastrianism is consistent with the role of the Parsis as the most progressive ethnic element, economically and materially, in the whole of India.

Their contribution to the development of commerce and modern industry, scholarship and art is out of all proportion to their numbers.

The Conversion Farce

THE conversion of a large number of people at a place in Tamil Nadu from Hinduism to Islam has been agitating the minds of many and presently it has assumed political overtones.

My mission in life is to propagate that all should trust in God, stay in his own religion and respect all other religions. All religions accept that there is one God. People might call Him by different names. But all those names point to that one All Powerful and at the same time All Merciful God. He has not sent only one religion to this world for all the people of all the times to follow.

Today Christianity is said to have the biggest formal following. But if God wanted that there should be only Christianity in this world, He would have sent it even during the days of Adam and Eve, and not after so many thousands of years after the first man. So neither Islam nor Hinduism can claim that that is the only true religion of God. The very fact that all these religions exist for the past so many hundreds of years and yet continue to flourish and spread are clear indications that the only True God is behind

them. Had they been man-made religions they would have perished after some time, like the Din-e-Illahi of Akbar the great. He does not show any special favour for a particular religion. Since the religions have their origin at one point of time in the history of man and was founded in one particular part of the world, their heritage and traditions vary. Hence all religions lead man to the one God.

Now, coming to man, none can claim that his birth was his own choosing. It is God's will that we are all born in this world. Of course, our parents have been co-operators in the divine design. God has willed that each one should be born in a particular religion. It is by His choosing that A is born a Christian, B a Hindu and C a Muslim. When God had willed you to born as a Hindu, who are you to migrate to another religion? Do you want to go against the will of God? Unless a man leads his life according to the will of God, he will fail.

So conversion from one religion to the other is an anti-God act and all religious conversions must be condemned. You may ask me what about children born to atheists? Is it the will of God that these children should grow as Godless

persons? God has created man to adore and love him. So a man who is born to parents who are the adherents of no religion, then that person should pray to God for guidance and may join any religion according to the dictates of his conscience, which is the voice of God.

It is certain that recently those who changed religion, did so, not because that the path of salvation is easier in the new religion. I am sure that these people have understood neither the teachings of Hinduism nor that of Islam. To put it in a nutshell their conversion is not due to doctrinal considerations.

Only socio-economic reasons are behind their conversions. They are more worried about matters temporal than spiritual. The central Government as well as politicians seem to consider mass conversions as a national threat. Both ministers and politicians air dash to the sleepy villages for on the spot enquiry. This has made the hitherto ignored people, to look unduly bit. Now this has induced so many people of the weaker sections to throw out the challenge of "Conversion to Islam" to catch the eye of the Government and seek redress to their unattended problems. I request the Government both at the Centre and

the State not to succumb to threats that are nothing but a blackmail tactics.

People converting themselves en masse will be a good riddance to the religion which they leave and would be a discredit to the religion that they join.

Man's life has to be regulated according to the principles of Dharma. When Dharma declines and Adharma reigns supreme, God sends his messengers to call people back to the path of virtue. In this particular period of India's history there is the need of outstanding leaders of all communities and religious persuasions, men imbued with the love of God and of the country coming forward and saving our nation from the perils that lie ahead.

It is painful to note that politicians generally look for their personal interests first, their party's interest next and country's interest last. It should be the other way about. Country's interest, party's interest and personal interest should be the order of priorities.

As one believing in God and setting great store by spiritual and moral values I am of the opinion that the basic solution for all the ills affecting our country is to return to the supreme Power who

ordains our destinies, through each one of your religion and avoid religious wars and conversions.

When it is advertised in the newspapers that for an All-India Competetive Examination only post-graduate are eligible, many from various parts of India apply. Those who apply are all post-graduates. In the competitive examination and the viva voce tests only a part of the competitors get through. The successful candidates owe their victory to their personal performance both in the written and oral tests, Nobody bothers from which college or university they graduated.

So also on the judgement day God will take into consideration the personal performance of the individual on earth, to mete out to him reward or punishment. God will not consider the religion that one followed on earth to award plus or minus points. If you are a man of good conduct it is enough to rise high in the estimation of God. A sinner will certainly be punished whether he lived as a Muslim, a Christian or a Hindu. Being a member of a particular religion will not work as a diplomatic passport to enter heaven. So why fight among yourselves to bring people into one religion or the other? Conversion is a fruitless exercise and a waste of our time and

energy which otherwise could be employed to ameliorate people's sufferings and enhance peace and friendship.

Jesus Christ has said that where three or four gathered in His name He (God) would be present. So wherever people gather together, whether it be a church, a mosque, a temple, a grudwara, or any place of worship, God will certainly be present. So how can you worship God and at the same time conspire to conquer others to your religion?

A man who is a true Muslim, or a Hindu, or a Christian should follow his own religion truthfully and should not try to convert others into his own religion. The desire to convert, is sure to inflame the feelings of greed and hatred. So my advice to all right-thinking people is to trust God, respect other religions and try to live in peace, love and harmony with all the people.

How All the Religions are Similar

MY motto, "Trust in God, Respect All Religions", is a very deep religious thought and at the same time, a very simple one, if you understand it properly.

I was born into a very pious and staunch Muslim family, but no one knows more about Hinduism than me. All who know me know that I am a very pukka Muslim, yet I build Hindu temples, because you can do God's work in any form, as He does not care about the form, ony the deed.

I bring the message of *EKTA*, that is 'Oneness'. And how can we have oneness? The only way is if we love each other's religions and love each other's customs. That is what I have come to teach.

But loving each other is easy when we see how much our religions are alike. So many similarities exist between the major religions of the world, we can draw only one conclusion that all the religions are sent by Him, only the customs differ, the bases remain the same.

There are four important nights for meditation

in both the Hindu and Islamic religions. The only difference is in how they meditate, but we find that the bases are the same: remembering Almighty God, who is common between them, whether called Allah or Brahma.

The four important nights in Hinduism are: Holi, Mahashivratri, Krishna Janmastami and Kali Chaudas.

In the same way, Islamic people also meditate the whole night during: Sabebarat; 27th Night of Ramzan, Miraj Shariff and Milad-Un-Nabi.

In these four important nights in each religion, the people meditate all night on God, for He comes very close then, to hear those who take His name.

Similarities come again when one considers pilgrimage. A Muhammedan has to go at least one time for pilgirimage to Mecca where the House of God is built. It is built of four walls and every pilgrim has to bow and pray to all four sides. Similarly there are four important places for Hindus, which are called 'Dhams'. A Hindu must visit these four places at least once in his lifetime.

The most important significance in both cases is: for Mecca the walls are built in such a way that whoever bows in the direction of each of the four

walls covers east, west, north and south; and when Hindus go to Dhams, the best part is that all these Dhams are situated in four different directions in India: Babri Kedarnath in the north, Rameshwaram in the south, Dwarka in the west and Jaganath Puri in the east. Look at the map of India to see that these houses of God are situated exactly north, south, west and east.

So my children, I have given you a few examples that though the religions may be different, the bases are the same, only the ways of worship are not the same.

In the Holy Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna says there is a Supeme Spirit which governs the whole universe and anybody can approach Him, but for one human being alone to find this spirit is too difficult and you cannot even be sure that your attempts will bring fruit. But, Lord Krishna says, if you come into me, you are definitely going to see Him.

Similarly, Jesus Christ says in the Holy Bible that if you want to approach my Father, then you come through me and definitely you are going to see Him.

Again, here I have proved the mode is different,

but the base is the same in both Hindu and Christian religions.

Up until now the major portion of human beings are confused because they have not understood nor have they been taught how common the simple act of prayer is among all the religions sent by God. Most know Mohammedans are praying five times a day, but the only difference is that Muslim prayers are said in mass or individually while in the Hindu as well as the Christian religions, only the priests perform these prayers.

The significance behind the celebration of Mashivratri can also relate to the significance of certain parts of Christian liturgy.

Mashivratri, in part, celebrates the time Lord Shiva saved the world from certain destruction through poisoning. Through the love and mercy of Lord Shiva the world was not destroyed for according to Hindu Shastra, Gods and the devils were churning the ocean of milk using the snake Vasuki as a stirring rope. The snake became sick with the stirring, vomitting up a poison so noxious and powerful even the smell could kill a person. Shiva saw this danger and without a thought to his own safety, scooped up the poison into his

mouth to save the world.

Parvati, to stop him from swallowing this terrible poison, rushed forward to squeeze his neck, the poison turning Lord Shiva's neck blue. To cool the fires of the poison which pained Lord Shiva for many years after, he wound a snake around his neck. Since then, he is known for always having a snake draped around his blue neck, but more importantly, he is known for his courage and valour for saving the world from certain destruction.

Similarly, we can look to the Bible in the Christian religion for a time when a prophet of God saved the world.

After God created Adam and Eve giving them honour and power over all the creatures on earth, still they disappointed Him by disobeying Him in the Garden of Eden, so God put them on earth to fend for themselves. They knew who God was, but they could not seem to convince their progeny, who succeeded in displeasing God all the more. God, in His disappointment, was ready to flood the whole world and do away with the experiment of man once and for all, but the angels reminded Him that the family of Noah was living the godly life and did He want to destroy

them too? God went to Noah to warn him of the flood of 40 days and 40 nights telling him to build an ark to house himself and his family, plus two of every kind animal. The ark was built and the flood came as promised destroying the entire world, except group in the ark.

Had it not been for the piety and love of the family of Noah, the world as we know it would not be here. By the time the flood subsided, so had God's anger against man. He promised never to flood the world again and instead promised from time to time to send messengers to remind man whenever he strayed too far from the right path. Thus, Almighty God declared Noah as His first prophet of the second world, the first having been destroyed in the flood. In His mercy, God also gave the new world of Noah all types of plants including the grape vine.

Noah enjoyed grapes very much, giving him the idea to pick and store many to enjoy at his leisure, but, of course, after a few days his store of grapes spoiled. Then Noah got the idea to squeeze out the juice for storage. The first vast of juice was fresh, but the other vats began to ferment and turn to alcohol. Noah was enjoying these later vats very much, one day enjoying so

much that he became wildly drunk, very hot and then tore all his clothes off before falling down in a drunken stupor. His son Hem found him thus, lying on the floor naked and was so shocked he decided to make a joke of it. He called his brothers Sham and Jephat telling them that if they wanted to see something really funny they should see their own father, lying naked on the floor in a drunken stupor. His two brothers were also shocked at hearing of the state of their revered father, but instead of laughing, they ran to get a sheet. They approached Noah with their eyes averted, so as not to give their revered father further shame, and covered him before taking Noah to his bed where he recovered. The purpose of this spiritual event - for indeed it was God's will tha Noah should seem to fall down drunk - had far reaching consequences for all time.

Noah called his three sons to him. To Sham, he said, "Your progeny shall become kings and prophets". To Jephat, he said, "Your progeny shall also become kings and prophets". Then Noah turned to his son Hem saying, "And your progeny shall always be slaves and servants", and indeed, they became Sudras.

At this time, God also told Noah that He had created a great big world and that the family of Noah should spread out over the world. Sham went to the west where he spawned the line of prophets from Father Abraham to Father Moosa to Lord Jesus to Prophet Mohammed. Jephat went east where his progeny included Lord Vishnu, Lord Rama and Lord Krishna.

Thus we can see that the fruit of Noah's faith not only saved mankind, but established him as the father of all the prophets of all the major religions of the world—Hindu, Christian, and Islam. Therefore, we can see that all the people and even all the prophets of the world are even to this day blood brothers, so why fight with each other when only the modes of our worship are different, while the blood coursing through our veins is the same.

Aim of Religion : Unity or Division?

ALL religions teach that there is one God. He has no beginning or end. He is the Alpha and Omega. He is the all powerful and the supreme. There is none equal or above Him. He is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient. He is all merciful and loving. Attributes like these and many more are accepted by all theists irrespective irrespective of the religion to which they belong. No one is foolish enough to advocate a number of gods, because it is illogical.

All the holy scriptures accept that without God's will nothing could happen. The Bible says, even the hairs on your head are counted. The Holy Koran says that not even a leaf might fall down without His sanction. The same Holy Koran tells man that new creation of life is willed by God and each one born in the world is because of His will and not because of the pleasant toil and sweat of the parents. No parent would like the children to fight amongst themselves and harbour enmity against each other. When it is so, can anyone believe that God wants man to fight against each other and to hate one

another in the name of religion?

If you accept that God is all goodness and we are all his children, then it goes without saying that we must act and behave as the true children of God growing in love, peace and charity. Now this is my mission. I want to remind man that he is the child of God, whatever might be his position in life. God-given mission of love, peace and unity among men. All religions from their inception have come a long way and it is high time that they stop and take the readings and find their position in relation to their origin. They should see whether they stick to the chartered routes or have deviated from them. Because the religions have derailed, the people who follow them draw their swords against the adherents of other faiths. Can anyone give any scriptural authority which sanctions holy wars and hatreds? During the first World War, the German army was blessed by priests and so on the other side of the boundary in France. Both the armies seeking the hand of the God to aid, protect, and lead them to victory against their opponents. The same Christian priests praying on both sides: what a ridiculous situation! It is like two brothers requesting their father to side them in their fight against each other.

The Holy Koran is very clear that Prophet Mohammed is not the only one sent by God. Many prophets were sent by Him in all ages and in all places. The fact that no two prophets were sent to the same place at the same time clearly illustrates that God has been sending down His prophets, avatars and nabis according to the needs of the times and places. So the follower of one prophet should not show disrespect and much less hatred to the teachings and followers of other prophets.

On the other hand one should love and respect all other prophets, messiahs, avatars and nabis also because they too were sent by Him.

There is a lot of difference in the respect shown to God, a prophet or superiors and our equals. In South India we join both the palms and keep them at our chest level while greeting our equals. For the salutation of our superiors, we have to raise the hands to the level of the forehead. While adoring God, we raise our hands above our heads.

In the Holy Koran the adoration of God has a unique place. Whenever a person bows down to God, he should also accept that there is none other than Him.

The honour done to prophets and other holy men are not the same as the adoration and worship extended to God. These prophets are houred because, they were sent by Him and also because of their closeness to God. Through them we see the invisible and formless God.

In Islam the keeping of idols in temples is prohibited. Then we must also see to the background that led to this stricture. In the days of Prophet Mohammed, there were many tyrants. They compelled the people to keep their statues and other forms of nude women, animal-like idols and the like and forced the people to revere them. To inculcate into their minds that the supreme God is a spirit, all idols were forbidden in the House of God.

The rulings imposed at one time cannot hold good forever. They have to be updated in keeping with the changing times. Now people know the difference between God and His prophets. They also know that when they bow before the four walls of 'Kaba' at Mecca Shariff, they are not adoring the black walls and committing idolatry. The Muslims going to Mecca to fulfil the Haj obligation cannot be accused of adoring the walls. When they bow towards the four directions,

it is made explicit that God is there in all the directions. The praying of the Muslims facing west is to give the followers of Islam a distinct colour and give them a sense of togetherness and not to mean that God rests in the west. In Hindu temples the idols are installed facing east. So the Hindus have to face west while praying.

The preachings of the prophets have a special application for the people of a religion belonging to a period in time. So outwardly the teachings may look to be at variance, when we compare the messages of various prophets. But on closer observation one could see the unity in fundamentals. We must always place greater emphasis and understanding on areas of agreement than superfluous disagreements.

The later-day religious teachers harped on the points of disagreements to separate their followers from the rest of humanity and establish their hegemony. Religious followers were slowly trained into religious fanatics. They gave up their reasoning power and took to unreasonable faith in their misguides, who turned into false prophets. Hence, we find people of one religion hating the other.

Remember my children, all men are the children of the same God and they should see the universality found in all religions. Also remember that each one should be firm in his own religion and that the other religions are also of His creation. So make religion the unifying factor.

Ritual is Greed, But Religion is Not

ALL religions are against greed, and all rituals are based on greed as they are man-made. It, therefore, behoves us to reject wasting money on rituals and spend it in the name of God by helping the needy. But remember, do not put the money, saved by not performing rituals, into your own pocket. Use it for a good cause.

For instance, we perform 'Mahashivratri Puja', but we do not waste money on it. Hardly twenty-five rupees is spent, because we do not believe in pouring hundreds of litres of milk on the deity, nor do we waste money on honey and perfume.

These are all man-made rituals. The sooner we reject them the better. In our case the money which would have been wasted on such rituals, we give to a good cause in the name of God.

One of the most important teachings of the Holy Koran is that if your inner heart feels the urge to give charity, give in the name of God, without thinking for a moment the recipient's caste, creed or religion. God has gone to the extent in the ayat of the Holy Koran on charity to say that even if a man is lying and falsely preten-

ding to convince you to help him, do not worry about it. If you pity him, then even if he is untrue, help him in the name of God. Whether the man is true or not be his problem as he will have to face the consequence of it. But you will get your reward. You have no right to think further than that.

In fact, what I have just stated was explained by our Holy Prophet in a discourse after the Jumma prayer regarding charity.

Personally, this is very important matter to me, because in my life whenever any person has come to seek my help and I felt that I must help him, I have never hesitated. I have never asked him what his religion was. I know that he is a creation of our Creator and that was enough for me.

In this way, I always help the children who are in trouble. In this way I also want my children to help others, thus earning protection of and reward from God.

□□□□

میلاد النبی

Milad-Un-Nabi

In the editorial of our magazine, Ekta, of February, there was a comment which asked as to why Milad-Un-Nabi, the birthday of Holy Prophet Mohammed, is not celebrated or observed by all communities as Christmas is. I hope to give an answer to this question by observing this great day by organising an all community procession in Ootacamund. For that purpose on that day my children from all parts of India should come to Ootacamund, and I will invite many people of Ootacamund also. In front of the procession there will be first the national flag, the flag of our Bharat Mata. The reason for this is clear to those who have carefully studied the Holy Koran which says wherever you stay, whosoever be the ruler, it is the bounden duty of every muslim to pray for the welfare of the ruler and also of the motherland.

Then there will be the flag of Islam, the green flag with the star and the moon on one side. But the flag of Bharat Mata will be bigger than the flag of Islam. These two flags together uptil now has never been taken out by the muslims in procession in India. By doing this I want to teach the children of Islam that according to the teachings

of the Holy Koran without the flag of Bharat Mata, no procession should be taken out.

On that day all the children, regardless of their religion, will be reciting in the procession, the favourite ayath of Islam: "La Illaha Illala, Mohammed-ur-Rasul-Ulla", to prove that children belonging to other religions have no grudge or hatred against Islam. I feel that it is a disgrace that a muslim generally considers people belonging to other religions as low and thinks himself to be great. I think in doing this he is defying the law of the Holy Koran and is placing himself very low in the eyes of God.

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The Power of the Gayatri Mantra

OM Bhur — Bhuva — Swah
OM Tat — Savitur — Varenyam
Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi
Dhiyo Go Nah Prochoclayat

THE Gayatri as a solar mantra, stands supreme. Directed to the sun, its 24 syllables scan to the Gayatri metra, a metre which in itself has been defined and visualised so sacred in its measured grandeur supposed to be. It is this mantra which the Brahmin receives when he wears the sacred thread and is pronounced twice born, and which then becomes his duty to recite during the three daily meditations – morning, noon and sunset.

The Gayatri was an exclusive preserve of the Brahmins who, in the Hindu system of caste, were made to bear both the privileges and the burdens of all intellectuals and spiritual pursuits. Its meaning which deepens with meditation and contemplation into endless esoteric chasms is, simply translated:

> Aum! O terrestrial sphere! O sphere! O celestial sphere! Let us contemplate the

splendour of the solar spirit, the Divine Creator, may He guide our minds Aum.

These are legends about the power of the Gayatri in oral spiritual lore. A Brahmin, Vidyaranya, had recited the Gayatri 24 lakh times with no effect. In his despondency, he turned to a Tantrik who promised him moksha and deliverence in ten days through dreaded rites performed in cemeteries to invoke Bhairavi, a terrifying aspect of the Devi. The Brahmin agreed to try the Tantrik method. It worked. At the end of the stipulated period, Bhairavi appeared but would not approach close enough for benediction. Nonplussed, Vidyaranya wanted to know the reason. The Devi replied that the power generated by his 24 lakh repetitions of the Gayatri Mantra would destroy her, if she came any closer. Vidyaranya had learnt his lesson. Armed with his new-found wisdom, he returned to the Vedic rites and with another one lakh repetition of the Gayatri, he achieved Moksha.

A powerful mantra like the Gayatri, incorrectly or half-heartedly uttered, can do harm. King Janaka, an ardent follower of the Gayatri Mantra, was a wise and devout king. One day as he passed the royal stables, a baby elephant with

the power of human speech caught his attention. On entering into a conversation with the elephant he discovered that a Brahmin who used to frequent his court had been reborn as this elephant, because, in his previous life, he recited the Gayatri needlessly and half-heartedly.

The Use and Abuse of Mantras

MANTRA is sound as prayer and incarnation, formulated to vibrate its way to truth. The Vedas, the Puranas and all our greatest hymns of praise enshrine the philosophy, a philosophy of sound, patterned to capture the illusive Reality and through it, the Abiding Truth.

The early revealed knowledge of the Hindus, the Vedas in their most inspired and valued sections, are a collection of mantras heard by the inner ear of illumined souls. They are received, chanted or sung in simple or elaborate metres, in endless permutations and combinations that include every conceivable variable of time, space and circumstance. The sound of truth is of necessity complex. For, it has to confront the complexity of time, life and death, before overpowering and progressing beyond it.

Creation centres on sound and its chief application, speech. An eighteenth century saint-musician, Ramprasad, has expressed it beautifully: "The Creator wakes, and Aum is manifest—the core of Being primeval romance".

All this is not to say that mantra belongs only to the realm of rarefied consciousness, that it ignores

the Reality of here and now. Mantra has a practical pragmative aspect which is occult and mystic elements with mask. The way to truth lies through Reality, and only through Reality. Life is inescapable, once you are born. And there is only one thing you can do with it—live it. Preferably fully, and to the best of your ability. Mantra is a scheme for successful living.

Mantras have very strictly laid down conditions and recommended methods for their japa or repetition. The Agni Purva points out, for instance, that a mantra softly spoken, is more effective than if repeated loudly; that repeated with lip movements only, it is a hundred times more potent and that mentally and inwardly repeated, the power increases a thousand fold.

Mantras cannot be self taught. There is no do-it-yourself way to a mantra. It has to be given to you by a guru, a preceptor. Initiation is implicit in the mantric way of thinking. However, industrious and learned a person, he cannot give himself a mantra. A seer, a rishi, a guru, a divine vision—he must wait for one of these to bless him with his mantras and this might involve years of patient waiting, futile search or even deception. Such was the case of the great mystic Kabir. Kabir, a

Muslim weaver of Benaras, just could not persuade his guru. The learned man chose to ignore the devout Kabir's repeated attempts. Kabir found a way out. One day in the darkness of pre-dawn, he lay on the steps of a holy ghat directly in the guru's path as he went down the steps to the water's edge. Stopping on Kabir, he involuntarily exclaimed: "Ram, Ram", in a spontaneous gesture of apology and passed on. Kabir guessed that it was the guru's personal mantra and, later, claimed that he had received it from the guru himself. The guru gracefully acknowledged Kabir's fitness to receive it.

Mantras are the magic of Indian truth. Their magical connotation extends in certain cults and practices, to witch-crafts, sorcery and exorcism; for magic can be both black and white. In fact, in the mantric context, there is a spectrum of five colours—white, gold, red, blue and black—symbolising various states of mind and emotion. Red is physical, blue spiritual, yellow intellectual, white stands for pure spirit, black for negation—hence black arts. It is the colour of the personality that we recognise as his or her distinctive aura. Aura is a vital element in all worship and ritual. The mood of the worshippers is directed by it, or

alternatively, generates it.

One cannot speak of Mantras without touching upon Tantra and Yantra. Tantra relies heavily on Mantra. It also harnesses female sexual power to uncoil, awaken and direct the "Kundalini Power" to travel up the spine, through six stages, in an ascent of "realess". The symbolism of Tantra is sexual and its approach sensuous and sensual, or one of pleasure and not denial. Tantra urges you to "raise your enjoyment to its highest power, and then use it as a spiritual rocket fuel".

Tantra also relies heavily on Yantras. A yantra is a geometrical diagram which serves as an icon charged with symbolism. The key of yantra of Tantrism is the "Shri Yahtra" which is really a symbolic diagram of the genesis of the world. It has a focal point, the Bindu, a central dot which, with its first movement, gives rise to a female triangle. From the original couple, or more correctly, their coupling, the universe unfolds and takes shape.

Kundalini power gives us an excellent measure of the wide-ranging nature of this ancient Indian magic, called Mantra. It is an appropriate note to that there is a tendency to equate Mantra with goodness and beneficence, but the malevolence

implicit in it, its dark and menacing aspects are often mixed out.

"There is nothing necessarily holy about Mantra. Mantra is a power (Mantra-Shakti) which lends itself impartially to any use. A man can be killed or injured by Mantra."

Magic is born of imagination, and imagination ranges freely over the entire landscape of man's consciousness. Mantra, which is nothing if not magic, must, therefore, take in darkness as well as light, terror as well as joy, evil as well as good. The attempt of our seers is to bend the magic of mantras to productive, positive purposes to avoid the destructive and the negative. Mantra is a double-edged sword. Used discerningly, it can clear the path to Truth. Handed carelessly, it can cut. Once acquired, it is a secret weapon that never fails the trained and skilled use or so the Hindus, the Muslims, the Christians, the Buddhists, and the Jains believe.

True Meaning of Jain Teachings

THE Jain scriptures put special emphasis on purity in life. For instance, they declare that a mere change of the robes – giving up the work-a-day dress and donning the ochre – coloured clothes – will not suffice to be termed holy. To be a real Jain saint, there should be a change in one's mind and a firm decision to uphold the five vows in his entire life – of non violence, adherence to truth, non-stealing, celibacy and non-attachment.

Incarnation

I am giving this discourse, because many people of different faith have not studied nor understood the true meaning of it. I will try to explain it to you as simple as possible and to prove that if the true meaning of it is understood and you will realise it applies to all religious faiths and you will become convinced about the oneness of God.

Incarnation is the appearance on earth of the Almighty, transcendental in time, place and culture, in a form which lends meaning to contemporary thought and life. He symbolizes the continuity of life and culture, and maintained the supremacy of his protection over forces of darkness and destruction.

The forms in which is described to have appeared in the pre-historic era supports the scientific interpretation of the long story of the world. Life grew and grows by continuous process of changes, from a simple ancestral form of life, age by age through time at which imagination reels, towards forms of highest beings and human civilization.

Emphasis on righteous conduct (Dharma) and the recurring mission of God to appear on earth

in the form of a prophet, when called upon to set the erring humanity back to the righteous path, enjoys reverence to the prophets, whenever and wherever they are born on earth. This is the belief embodied in the subconsciousness of Indian mind, and has influenced in varying degree the followers of all faiths. If I may say so, the belief in the oneness of God and his varied manifestation lends support to the understanding of some of the epoch making events in the recent experiences of India.

All the religions of the world co-exist in India. There is an almost bewildering diversity of languages, customs, habits and levels of economic development of her people. Nevertheless, there is a unity in this diversity, which is of enduring and continuing character. It is the commonly shared human values and proper reactions at crucial moments of her history that has enabled India to march towards her cherished goal for the establishment of a democratic, secular and egalitarian order of society.

If this discourse is understood by my children and the people of the world, millions of people should profit by the philosophy of universal reverence for the prophets of the world, already

born or yet to come, in the setting of the time and place where he may fulfil his mission.

I am giving some of the quotations from various scriptures sent by the Almighty through his prophets, avatars and messiahs.

Lord Krishna says in his Gita: "I take the human form in order to assist my devotees and when I am born the darkness and unrighteousness are dispelled. I destroy sin and help the good to hoist the flag of righteousness (Dharma). I destroy the hoards of evil ones and establish the sages on the throne of honour. I re-establish in society righteousness as well as truth".

From this we can easily reach the conclusion that in human form Krishna is not God but in him God resides and God took form of Krishna to bring the people on the right path.

Lord Jesus teaches us in the Bible: "He that receiveth you receiveth me and he that receiveth me receiveth Him that sent me".

"He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward and he that receiveth a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward."

It also proves through Lord Jesus's teachings that Lord Jesus is not God but God resides in him.

He has further explained the quality of a human form in which God resides, namely the prophet and the righteous man.

Further, God taught Holy Prophet Mohammed in the Holy Koran: "Oh, beloved prophet inform and remind your followers that whoever disrespects a prophet, I will never be his friend", and also revealed to the Holy Prophet that He had sent several prophets before Mohammed to diffrent nations, when the need arose to teach their people in their own languages.

When Holy Prophet Mohammed was giving to his devotees discourses on charity that how it pleases God if a man gives charity truthfully from his heart in the name of God, he gave an example of Hatim Tai who was born 1000 years ago before the Prophet and still He praised Hatim Tai's name in reverence. On that night when the Holy Prophet was meditating God informed him: "O, Prophet, it was not Hatim that was giving, but it was I who was giving".

After going through all examples of various scriptures and teachings of various prophets and avatars I am sure you are now convinced that God is one but he comes in different forms to different nations when times arise for him to

come in a human form. But please understand that his human form is not God, because it perishes, but inside the human form God the eternal always remains eternal, imperishable and immortal.

So I conclude this discourse by giving you a simple lesson that the thing which perishes is not God, so we should not compare him with any one perishable but at the same time you must give reverence to that human form in which God resides. But do not compare God with him.

Mirza Ashdullah Khan "Ghalib"

GHALIB literally means "over-powering", "towering" or "superior". Time has proved that he was indeed Ghalib! Ghalib was born at Agra during the fall of Moghul Empire. Men of literature and arts were forced to leave Delhi, in order to earn their livelihood, but Ghalib left Agra for good to settle in Delhi. He made a conscious effort to adopt a new style in prose and verse.

Ghalib wanted action and adventure, turmoil and tribulation. In a couplet in Persian he beautifully exemplified: "An infant is restful while its cradle is in motion". In another couplet, he calls free creative force of human heart, a horse that breaks loose and goes into a gallop.

Ghalib regards man as the greatest creation, so great that even angels bow to him. Sorrow and desire make human life worth living. Without sorrow one cannot enjoy happiness and without death there is no pleasure of life.

To Ghalib, all men are equal. Costumes are only outer differences and underneath breathes the same body. Customs and faiths are only the demarcation lines and the goal lies far beyond,

far from the Church and the temple, far from the boundaries of conceptions. Religion is only a path and whosoever makes that path his goal reaches nowhere. To be confined is nothing but an expression of lack of courage. Places of worship are but a refuge for the weak. Ghalib gives an example of it.

A youngster of a bird feels safe in the narrowness of its nest only because it cannot fly. Acquisition of flying power brings for him the joys of the vast atmospheric expanse.

Ghalib stands for equality in human affairs. In his practical life too, he supported so many poor people. In one of his poems, he complains that the rich has much to eat without appetite and the poor do not get a morsel of dry bread though hunger looms large in their lives. He respects every person and asks others to do so. He knows that everyone, however poor or ordinary he may be, has his own worth. He does not look down upon even thorns, because they too, he thinks, are a part of the garden.

The Meaning of Om Tat Sat and Alif Lam Meem

(One of Babaji's Muslim sons has asked what is the meaning of the Mantra and the words mentioned above. Babaji's explanatory discourse is given below.)

AUM means Supreme Spirit, the Creator, the Eternal, the Unperishable, One not born of a mother's womb.

Tat means action; right action or wrong action. If the action is wrong, then your voice cannot be heard by Aum, or the Almighty God. And to do any right action the quality of Sat is essential.

Sat means Truth. Whether you benefit out of it or not, you have to stick to the Truth.

So, first you must develop the habit and master to be truthful, even if the consequences hurt you, then and only then will you be able to carry out the right action. If you do so throughout your life, be sure whatever you ask from Him He will grant you your wish, because it will be truthful.

Alif Lam Meem stands for "I am Allah, the All-Knowing". In its abbreviated form, that is, Alif Lam Meem. is called "Muk ataat"

Each letter represents an attribute of God. In fact these are initial letters of three names. Allah, Gibril and Mohammed – that is, the source of revelation, the heavenly Messenger who brought it to the earth, and the human Messenger through whom it was propagated in human speech.

Alif (A) is a breathing sound and comes from the throat.

Lama (L) is a lingual, palatal or dental sound from the middle of the mouth.

Meem (M) is a labial or lip sound.

It is a symbol of the Beginning, Middle and End. In other words, Life, Growth and Death, the Beginning and the End.

The opening chapter of the Holy Koran, having seven verses called Sura Fatihah, meaning opening chapter, is said to contain the essence of the Holy Koran.

The second chapter of the Holy Koran, called Sura Baqara, meaning the Heifer, is called the whole teaching of the Holy Koran. In this chapter, God revealed to the Holy Prophet through Gibril to teach people of the world in which three important codes to be performed in their life to get favour from God. They are, (1) To believe in

one God and not to associate partner with him, (2) To be righteous, (3) To be truthful and steadfast.

Now the similarity of Alif Lam Meem with the Vedic Mantra of Om Tat Sat is clear. Both call upon man to develop his life in a truthful manner so as to do good action in life.